Care to Dance:

Listening, Watching, Dancing and Reflecting the Practice of a Community Arts and Health Dance Artist working with Older People

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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is community arts and health provision for older people. It presents an ethnography of two community dance for older people groups in North West England, UK. It explores the experience of being a participant in the groups, of facilitating the groups and, additionally, of researching with the groups. I acted as both the researcher and the dance artist facilitating the sessions.

Much of the existing arts and health literature focuses on the outcome of an intervention. This thesis instead turns its attention to the processes of community arts, seeking to understand more about the mechanisms that might lead to the studied health and well-being outcomes.

The data were collected over a period of 13 months and includes session plans, videos of sessions, recorded conversations with dancers (participants) and reflections of the dance artist/researcher in both text and movement. The findings chapters reflect the modality of collection: *Listening* to the dancers talk about the sessions, *Watching* video recordings of the sessions, *Dancing* a response to the sessions and the process of researching and *Reflecting* through writing on the process of being a researcher.

Using thematic analysis, both the dancers' and the dance artist's experiences were interpreted through a framework highlighting the physical, psychological and dimensions of participation. The dance artist's experience was additionally organised with respect to the session planning. The use of the creative movement as a thinking process further revealed that there is much in community dance that does not translate to text; bodily held knowledge and experiences do not transpose to language easily.

My thesis contributes to the arts and health and gerontology literatures by revealing the care flowing between the participants and the artist in the sessions and the work required of all members of the group to facilitate that

care. It also contributes methodologically through the richness uncovered by the multi-sensory methods employed.

Acknowledgements

The last three years have been an amazing, exciting and emotional journey. I wish to thank anyone and everyone who played a part and, when you treat everything as data, that means I thank everyone I have interacted with in some way in the last three years: you have been the source of something in the pages that follow.

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I only made it this far because of my friends and family, both on line and IRL. You encouraged, cajoled and, when required, roughly shoved me through the whole PhD process. Cheers mate, I owe you one.

For my husband and my daughters, I am sorry it took so long, yes, we can go out as a family now. Thank you for waiting. I love you.

Finally for all my dancers. Thank you for your generosity, your curiosity and indulging all my questions and experiments. You are every page.

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Glossary

The writing that follows assumes a basic familiarity with conventional dance or dance based exercise classes so here I will expand a little on how I understand some of the descriptive terms I use.

Creative dance - dance where the imagination is used to create movement. I will always give a framework or a creative prompt and I scaffold this work very heavily (i.e. I set constraints or clear guidelines, 'just do anything' is likely to create fear and hesitancy).

Follow me dance - The dance leader does movements and the dancers copy simultaneously. Dancers are able to copy because the patterns are predictable or the dance leader gives cues that enable the dancers to pick up the next move.

Line dance - the dancers stand in rows and repeat a short dance phrase for the length of the song. The dance might change 'walls' by the dancers all turning either a quarter or a half turn (this will be set before beginning) at the end of the phrase and repeating the phrase to the new front. Typical movements include grapevines, two steps (foot pattern of side, close, side and tap), kicks and heel taps.

Mixer dance - where a dancer has an opportunity to dance with many other people in the room. Whereas with the social dance, there will be a predictable pattern as to who your next partner is, the mixer dance will have the opportunity for more random selection.

Pass the move dance - at Sittingham, an individual dancer will decide on a single movement (for example making a circle with the arms by first stretching both arms up high and then moving them outwards, down to their sides), the whole group copies and then the next dancer has the responsibility for making a move. At Crantock, the dancers would take a whole phrase of music and create many moves for the group to copy before passing on to the next dancer.

Social dance - when I use this term, I am referring to a partner dance. The partners may or may not be in physical contact (one or two hand hold) and the partners may or may not remain constant for the entire dance (in a progressive dance, one person remains on the spot whilst the other person in the partnership moves onto a new partner).

Somatic movement - movement this is initiated by attention to inner sensations. I have named this 'movement' rather than 'dance' as the latter commonly has a sense of audience (i.e. how it looks for others) whereas somatic movement is concerned only with sensation.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 My story

For many years, I worked as a community dance artist working with older people. I provided fun, social, dance based exercise for people from age 50 to 101 in North Manchester and I had more freelance work than I could physically take on. Then came the financial crisis, the London 2012 Olympics and the election of the UK's coalition government (which coincided with my second period of maternity leave). When I tried to re-establish myself as a freelance artist, there was no funding available for the sort of project I used to work on. Thanks to 'austerity' all non-essential services were cut. I did not believe my community dance work was non-essential but I needed proof. I became a researcher.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Arts funding in the UK

The arts have had a central funding body (for England and Wales) since the 1940s (Arts Council England, n.d.). Under New Labour, from 1997/8 to 2004, the government department with responsibility for arts (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) had its budget increased by 60% (Fisher and Figueira, 2011). In 2004, the government announced a funding freeze for Arts Council England (Fisher and Figueira, 2011). The freeze was due to end in 2008 but then the financial crisis happened, followed by a diversion of lottery funds to pay for the 2012 London Olympics (BBC, 2007). In 2010, under the newly elected, Conservative led coalition government, the Arts Council received a funding cut of almost 30% (BBC, 2010). Further cuts were announced in 2013 (Arts Council England, 2014).

The arts and health movement in the UK started with the growth of the community arts movement in the 1960s and emerged into a practice in its own right (arts in community health) in the late eighties (White, 2009). Community

arts and health is funded through a patchwork assortment of providers: Arts Council England are not the only provider but following a period of austerity, they are one of a few remaining sources. The funding for projects I had previously worked on came from various sources: Big Lottery Fund[1] and local authority funding through POPPs (Partnership for Older People Projects) and through arts development. POPPs was a Department of Health funded pilot that aimed to investigate joining up local services (health service, social service and voluntary sector) to improve older people's health and well-being (Windle et al., 2008).

1.2.2 Local Authority funding in the UK

Of course, the arts were not the only area of UK government spending that experienced cuts following the global financial crash in 2008 and the election of the coalition government in 2010. In England, local authorities lost 27% of their purchasing power during the term of the government (2010-2015) (Hastings et al., 2015). Furthermore, the cuts were not evenly distributed: social care spending was reduced by 14% in the poorest communities but rose by 8% in the least deprived areas (Hastings et al., 2015). One research paper estimates that 10% of local authorities have closed arts provision and 20% of councils have reduced their arts expenditure by more than 15% (Romer and Richens, 2015). The short term nature of the POPPs funding meant that funding was unavailable on my return from maternity leave.

1.3 Beginnings

Taken all together, the lack of funding available towards the end of 2011 meant I actually 'signed on' and claimed Job Seekers Allowance[2] for six months. Just as my claim period was coming to an end, I saw funding advertised for post

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[1] Distributor of UK National Lottery funds to good causes.

[2] Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) is a welfare payment to people who are out of work but actively working to get back into the labour market. The limited nature of my claim period was because I had not made full National Insurance contributions in the previous two years (because of maternity leave).

graduate research at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), I applied thinking it would be 'good practice' for the following year when I would ready to do a 'proper' application. However, I was deemed already ready and commenced this research full time in September 2012 in the Research Institute for Health and Social Change (which later became the Centre for Social Change and Community Well-being).

When I originally applied for the PhD studentship, I proposed that my thesis would be a quantitative social network analysis showing the difference in older people's satisfaction with their relationships before and after a dance based intervention. Through reading the wide range of literatures and beginning to explore 'measures', I became nervous of the objectiveness of the approach: how would I account for someone who was happy in her own company or someone who was constantly surrounded by people she merely tolerated rather than enjoyed being with?

The shift away from a quantitative focus occurred mostly during two key turning moments. Early in my first year (2012/13), both whilst sitting in my PhD supervisor's office, the shape of my future thesis changed dramatically. The first moment, I was stuck with writing and my supervisor was asking for clues on how I usually think through problems and I said I would normally just move. "Well do that then, dance it" she said. It is possible she meant for me to dance, get the idea straight and then get it on paper. However, the result of that thinking became 'What Will Become', a dance piece that will be discussed in *Dancing* section 6.4.1.

The other pivotal moment, a few months later, I was talking about something that had happened at home that felt relevant "but it wasn't part of my research" I moaned. "Of course it is," said my supervisor, "Data and process are intricately bound up with who you are. Your identity as mother, researcher and practitioner is all part of this research." That comment shaped the reflexive nature of this thesis.

I attempted to establish a new dance for older people group local to the university. I had no professional links to the area so had to make contacts anyway I could. I met a lot of people and ran a handful of pilot sessions but the short timescales involved in PhD work meant that I was unable to commit to the required community engagement work to enable recruitment to be successful (Sixsmith et al., 2003). Detailed background of the groups I eventually worked with are in Chapter 3.

These brief few paragraphs are an attempt to convey the complexity and way finding through dead ends that marked my first year of research training. The next section details the final shape of the research and introduces the main body of the thesis.

1.4 Introduction to the thesis

This thesis is an ethnography of two community dance for older people groups. It explores the experience of being a participant in the groups, of facilitating the groups and, additionally, of researching with the groups. It is important to look at these experiences as much of the existing literature researches the outcomes of such arts groups rather than the processes. The work under study here is not a generic dance based intervention that can be utilised in many different settings without amendment. Instead, it is context specific, person-centred practice and requires the standpoint of the dance artist co-creating the work to explain why and how specific practices are used for this particular setting.

The chapters are named, not with the standard titles of 'Results', 'Analysis', 'Discussion', etc., but for the mode of attention that was used to uncover the findings. Dance terms will also be used to represent the close relationship of this writing to my moving body.

The thesis will first explore the conceptual framework that supports the research (Chapter 2). The research draws on principles of critical, feminist gerontology and person centred practice. Key areas to define include well-being, performativity, creativity and community. The thesis then explains the

methodology and methods used in the research (Chapter 3), mainly an ethnographic approach but including some practice led research elements. What then follows are four findings chapters, each one using a different method to explore the experiences of being in the group or researching. *Listening* (Chapter 4) uses the dancers' voices and hears them discuss care, self-care, and the aesthetics of the sessions whilst disowning the title of 'dancer'. *Watching* (Chapter 5) uses the researcher's observation of video recordings of the sessions and sees hidden practices of care, trust and being social. *Dancing* (Chapter 6) uses movement based reflection to explore both the experiences of being in the group and researching; the movement problematizes which bodies can be dancers and discovers more about the person centred nature of the arts practice. The final findings chapter, *Reflecting* (Chapter 7), is a reflective account of the research process and considers the roles I fulfilled as I parented, practiced and wrote my way through my PhD. *Ensemble* (Chapter 8) revisits the research aims and draws together the findings before the thesis concludes in Chapter 9 with evaluation of the research and future intentions.

1.5 Boundaries of scope

This thesis will only consider my practice with two particular community dance for older people groups. The groups are not compared but are considered as two aspects of my singular practice.   The thesis will therefore also not examine other art forms beyond dance and it will not look at arts work for people living with particular conditions. Whilst I set out wanting to prove the value of community arts work, I am uncomfortable with an instrumental arts standpoint so I will not be looking at financial or health outcomes. I am not holding up myself and my work as an example of best (or good) practice, I have been working long enough and retained enough dancers to consider myself competent, however, it is for other people to judge the quality of my work. I will content myself with instead investigating the nature of my practice.

1.6 End notes

This introductory chapter has situated the research and the researcher historically and politically. It has noted the marginalised nature of working in community arts and health in the time of austerity present moment. The next chapter provides an overview of a range of literature to situate the thesis and, indeed, the research.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the review of the literature that provides a conceptual framework for the doctoral research. My research is interdisciplinary as it sits between ageing, community arts and well-being. As such, I am unable to provide an in depth review of a single subject but instead offer a wide range of theoretical thinking that informs the arts practice and the research in this thesis. The areas covered in this chapter relate to how I view the participants and the process of community based arts and health work. The thesis is about the experience of older people, mainly women, in a community arts and health sessions so I begin by drawing on the ageing and feminism literatures. I then examine embodiment and well-being and how they intersect with ageing and social relating as this will inform my methodology in the next chapter. Next, I look at conceptualisations of community and performativity before examining arts facilitation (as I do it) and creativity (which, here, is synonymous with art making), these areas are necessary for the thesis to situate the practice component. The final section will be a brief exploration of relevant arts and health literature which will establish a gap in the literature and allow me to complete the chapter by introducing my research aims.

2.1.1 Note about language

An important consideration before the main body of the chapter is to consider how I use language around the sessions. The dance sessions are 'sessions' not lessons or classes. I am the session leader, dance leader or dance artist, I am not the teacher. Dance 'leading' differs from dance 'teaching' in that instead of (or, for other dance leaders, sometimes as well as) leaning on a tradition or syllabus, the dance practitioner offers opportunity for the dancers to use their own creativity in the sessions (Creative and Cultural Skills, 2011). Whilst dance techniques are used in my sessions, the dancers are not being offered a technical dance class: they do not do things 'wrong' or incorrectly and then receive corrections so that they may improve. They come together to dance in an inclusive and eclectic manner. The activity is more fun, social exercise than dance technique class. Amans (2013a) prefers the terms dancer or participant

rather than labelling people with a condition or certain age (for example, Dance for Parkinson's, dementia dance group or 60+ dance). The terms 'dancers' and 'participants' will be used interchangeably throughout to refer to all members of the dance groups. The act of calling the members 'dancers' means the group is arts based rather than health focused: it is almost a 'performative act' to name them dancers, they become dancers because they are recognised as such (Bell, 2006). The publicity for the Sittingham[3] dance sessions did not refer to an age, it advertised 'seated dance exercise' suitable for 'older people'. It was up to individuals to decide if they were older or would benefit from seated exercise. The publicity for Crantock was produced by the venue rather than the dance artists and referred to '50+ dancercise'. The age limit was used as, historically, the session had been set up using Big Lottery funding for older people, which funds projects for people aged 50 and over, and the description was never altered. However, the session welcomed people of any age who felt it might be appropriate for them.

2.2 Ageing and feminism

Ageing is a key area for this research project because the work is focused on older people. As the dancers are mostly women, the research also examines the intersection of gender and ageing. A review of the literature indicates that there is no single definition for 'older' people; the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing is looking at adults aged 52 and over (Jivraj et al, 2012), Victor et al. (2005) interviewed adults aged 65 and over, Stevens and Tilburg (2000) worked with women aged 54 to 80. In my previous work for Diamond Dance[4], 'older' was defined by the Big Lottery Fund (the funders of the project) as 50 and over. Government policy documents tend to use 65 as the entry to older age presumably as this was, historically, the age of retirement (for men), it is

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[3] Sittingham and Crantock are pseudonyms for the research settings and will be fully introduced in Chapter 3.

[4] To avoid the Crantock setting being easily recognised, I have used a pseudonym for the company I did the work for/through.

no longer as entrenched as it once was. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Manchester City Council suggest the category of 'older people' to be abandoned; there is nothing separate about older people, they should be treated as fully engaged citizens (Davis, no date and McGarry, 2013). Hence, this research will not draw on any existing definitions of older people and will, instead, work with any adults who identify with the term 'older adult' respecting an individual's agency to engage with community arts work on their own terms. Related to defining age and ageing, Pickard (2014) reminds us that much writing on the older body comes from the standpoint of the younger person: I must remain conscious to the 'age gaze' during my arts practice and through the writing of this research.

A life course approach to ageing means that I consider it the cumulative effect of a lifetime of experience, rather than assuming ageing to be a biomedical product of reaching particular age (Dannefer and Settersten, 2010). Ageing is the process of living a gender, class, race, sexual identity and other identity constructions in a particular time and location. The ageing experience is also dependent on when and where crucial life stages are reached (for example was an individual conceived or a small child (and hence in need of nourishment) during a time of food shortage or did an individual enter the workforce during a time of strong unions or anti-discriminatory legislation) (Bengston et al., 2005a).

The British Society of Gerontology (BSG) (2013) states its aims in its constitution as:

2.1   For the furtherance and promotion of gerontology in particular: to increase, disseminate and apply knowledge of the social and behavioural aspects of ageing in human beings by means of research, teaching and education, and to support, encourage and raise standards of research, service and teaching in gerontology, and to aid researchers, teachers and practitioners in their professional work by such methods as the Society may from time to time determine.

2.2   The care and relief of the aged.

2.3   Research and study of the problems related to social and behavioural gerontology including: the means of relieving the infirmities and disabilities

associated with ageing, and the publication of the results of research and study.

Hence the gerontology literature underpins the research here as I am interested in the social aspects of a provision specifically for older people.

For some gerontologists, gender is not a salient factor in ageing. Silver (2003) suggests that being older reduces male privilege to such an extent that ageism experienced outweighs any gender differences. Feminist gerontology need not solely be the study of women in older age but can use its standpoint to interrogate the concept of power as it affects ageing (Calasanti, 2004). Indeed, whilst in the past, the majority of older people were women, several factors (including the passing of the World War I widows and advances in medical treatment for conditions that affected more men) mean that older age is becoming less predominately female (Arber and Ginn, 2005). However, Gullette (2004) argues that ageing happens earlier for women than men. Feminist gerontology, much like the second and third wave of feminism, is activist research. However as Minkler and Holstein (2008) suggest, older feminists may not wish to commit as much time and effort to activism as their younger selves would have done. Combining a feminist standpoint with a life course perspective leads to the conclusion that women in older age are likely to be more disadvantaged than men after living through gender discrimination in school (Van Anders, 2004), family life (Marmot et al., 2012) and retirement (Dressel, 1988). However, as Cruikshank (2006) notes, even feminist gerontology is taught from the perspective of a younger person so we must remain vigilant for the 'age gaze'.

Intersectionality is significant concept when considering this research (Cho et al., 2013). Many of the dancers in this research, may lack privilege due to age and gender but are privileged with regards to class and race (Dressel, 1988). Thanks partly to the headway made by the second wave of feminism (Hanisch, 1998 cited in Schechner, 2013), these women enjoyed successful careers which have contributed to comfortable retirements even when left single either through divorce or widowhood. This means that, despite the feminist nature of

this research, it is likely that there are many men who are not ageing as 'successfully' (Rowe and Kahn, 1997) as the participants in this research. Rowe and Kahn's (1997) model of successful ageing will be considered more thoroughly in *Listening* but, briefly, they suggested that assumptions around what is normal for ageing could be challenged: old age did not have to mean inevitable decline. However, by announcing 'positive change is possible' (Rowe and Kahn, 1997: 437) they also planted the suggestion that it was an individual's responsibility to make sufficient effort so that they would not succumb to disease and disability in later life. The model fails to take account of the social factors that can impact on a person's ability to age well, for example, gender, ethnicity and income (income is also influenced by gender and ethnicity thus compounding the difficulties for oppressed groups). Liang and Lau (2012) argue that the concept of 'successful ageing' has been uncritically accepted without the acknowledgement that the concept is American/Eurocentric and connected to capitalist notions that age can be avoided with appropriate investment. *Listening* will demonstrate that the Rowe and Kahn model is not without its critics but the notion that it is a capitalist concept is valid. A further issue with the Rowe and Kahn model is that an individual can only know that they are successfully ageing through markers that can only be known (at present) through a third party: a health professional. This gives rise to questions of the perceived relative value of objective knowledge and subjective, embodied knowledge.

2.3 Embodiment

Embodiment is a concept that is frequently referred to in the literature but rarely defined. Embodiment is the lived experience of the physical body (the mass of blood, bones and muscles) (Bresler, 2004). In sociology there are variations on how that embodiment is thought to occur. Early sociologists such as Simmel (1908, cited in Waskul and Vannini, 2006) and Cooley (1902, cited in Waskul and Vannini, 2006) considered the process of embodiment as seeing another and knowing the limits of self. Later Goffman (1959, cited in Waskul

and Vannini, 2006) proposed that embodiment is a process performed in relation to others and socially accepted practices. Concurrently, phenomenologists such as Husserl (1893, cited in Waskul and Vannini, 2006) considered embodiment as a site of personal meaning: the world is experienced and understood through the presence of the physical body. Finally Waskul and Vannini (2006) cite socio-semiotic interactionism where a body is created both in the performance of self for other and in the other's performance of self for us: an embodied body has agency but is also inscribed on by others.

Block and Kissell (2001:8) remind us that embodiment is also a social experience.

> being *embodied* implies being *embedded* as well – embedded
> in a society, a culture, a language (emphasis in original)

Sklar (2001: 30) notes that 'movement knowledge is a kind of cultural knowledge'. Bodies are aware of the 'correct' way to move in certain spaces (for example, walking on the left in British school corridors, standing on the right on the escalators on the London Underground, or moving between sitting, kneeling and standing in a Catholic church) and not moving in the socially agreed way marks that person as an outsider (Sklar, 2001).

Feminist gerontology is also working to acknowledge embodiment in older age. Social critical gerontology has often 'ignored' the body so to avoid reducing ageing to a biomedical process (Twigg, 2004). But to deny the body is to deny much about the experience of ageing, particularly for women where successful ageing is often about submitting to processes that ensure ageing does not show in the body (or at least the signs are very much reduced) such as dying hair, dieting and wrinkle reduction. Katz (2010) additionally notes social gerontology has been wary of emphasising the body but to fulfil its 'humanistic goals' (Katz, 2010:364) of equitable society and healthy older age then it needs to bring bodies into focus. Acknowledging that ageing is socially constructed does not mean that we have to deny that ageing occurs in, and leaves its marks on, the body (Turner, 1996).

2.4 Well-Being

In 1946, the World Health Organisation defined health as 'a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 2003: no page). Ryff (1995) defines well-being as having many elements: being happy in oneself, the ability to steer one's own life, mastering the skills required in life, good relationships, having a life purpose and the ability to continue to learn and develop. In 2008, the New Economics Foundation introduced the 'Five ways to well-being' (Aked et al., 2008); Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give. The five ways were positive behaviours that individuals could do, on a day to day basis, to improve their lives. After an initial flurry of excitement including the Prime Minster announcing a shift away from focus on GDP to national well-being (Berry, 2014) and the ONS beginning measuring well-being (the third annual report was produced this year (Evans et al., 2015)), the global economic crisis appeared to cause the UK government to lose interest in well-being. In 2014, an all parliamentary group had to recommend using the well-being data being collected when devising policy (Berry, 2014). The Tory led coalition government also began to implement policies that went against the suggestions in the report (for example, the focus of the Job Centre Plus appeared to shift away from helping people into work and instead focused on sanctions (Webster, 2013)). Edwards and Imrie (2008) critique the five ways to well-being from a disability activist standpoint and note, again, that the policy is so constructed as to put the responsibility for well-being at a personal level and disregard the structural inequalities that can impact minority groups disproportionally when compared with groups with more visibility.

In the 2012 'Marmot review' (Marmot et al., 2012), it was argued that social inequality leads to poorer health. The European wide review sought solutions to social inequity. Marmot and the team proposed a life-course approach to well-being, starting with prenatal care, through childhood, working life and into older

age. They advocated social and health protection through life, access to safe work and, in older age, they recommended governments should,

> Introduce coherent effective intersectoral action to tackle inequities at older ages, both to prevent and manage the development of chronic morbidity and to improve survival and well-being across the social gradient (Marmot et al., 2012:1019)

The authors also noted that countries needed to use taxes fairly to fund this care and that since the economic crisis of 2008, social health inequities had worsened.

Mike White preferred the term 'flourishing' to 'well-being'. Flourishing suggests 'resilience and emergence, and it presumes inter-dependency' (White, 2011: no page); if an individual's growth causes damage to others or the environment, then they are not flourishing. McCormack and Titchen (2006) describe facilitating flourishing as enabling an individual to achieve their maximum potential. Flourishing is relational and the professional development work McCormack and Titchen do intends to spread that flourishing back amongst the community their students work in. I now turn to look at community.

2.5 Community

Community is another term that is used frequently but has many differing definitions. Mooney and Neal (2009) offer four conceptions of community. The two that are of most interest here are 'community as a spatial concept' (Mooney and Neal, 2009: 10) where people share a physical location and can meet face to face, and 'community as non-spatial sites of identity and culture' (Mooney and Neal, 2009: 16) where people share an identifying characteristic but may or may not share a physical space (for example online communities or a diaspora). What they share is a sense of belonging, they do not even have to actively do anything to belong to a community, feeling there is potential to interact with others in the community is enough to create a sense of belonging. However, Gergen (1999) warns of the potential to disempower sections of

society by grouping them together, because of one shared aspect of identity, and then treating them as a homogeneous group.

Both the wider community that the participants in this study live in and the community of dancers they form within the session are treated as an asset based community model (Foot and Hopkins, 2010). This model is based on valuing the knowledge and experience embodied in a community rather than just focusing on the problems within. Foot and Hopkins (2010) promote a way of working with communities that suggest that answers to problems can be found by empowered members of the community of interest, rather than imposed by an 'expert' coming from outside (although the group may require support to enact the solution if structures deny them power).

Everitt and Hamilton (2003:70) describe the community created by arts and health projects as 'warmth, belonging and friendship'. Mooney and Neal (2009:30) see the word 'community' as code for desirable, steady, strong connections, they also note it is often an aspirational term. Kuppers, when discussing the community in community arts, wonders if steady, uniform qualities are something we should be aiming for when often, what appears in community arts projects is a multi-storied output (Kuppers, 2007:10).

Wenger (1998) terms people coming together for a purpose a 'community of practice'. Important to his conception of community was the idea of disparate individuals coming together to engage in a meaningful activity. This meaningful activity is produced in negotiated collaboration (or conflict) with others (thus containing the opportunity for producing a novel response) based on historic practice. Using this definition of community means that the creation of the group is not solely under the control of the artist leading the session but is a product of all attendees.

Hutchinson et al. (2008) found that older women used the social support found in group leisure activities as a coping mechanism for dealing with stress and challenges found in later life. One reason for this might be Boneham and Sixsmith's (2006) finding that older women, after a lifetime typically spent in caring roles, have a large lay health knowledge and they recognise the role of

social support in good health. Hence the mere act of coming together as a group can be beneficial for older women's health even before the introduction of arts activity.

2.5.1 Community arts

Cameron et al. (2013) note community artists and community health practitioners share similar values and priorities (if not always a common language). The researchers judge that arts and health work has better outcomes (artistic, health and community) when there is a commitment to quality on a project. Finally, the authors note arts projects frequently lead to participants engaging more strongly with their wider community.

Whilst 'community arts' is a contested term, Kuppers (2007) suggests that it includes people coming together to create together (as opposed to being directed as in traditional, professional performance practice), being process based (rather than product focused, see also Cole, 2011) and being structured so as to be accessible to all (not just the majority nor just the young, fit and healthy) (Kuppers, 2007). Overlapping, Barndt (2008) has four key elements of practice that make community arts:

- Collaboration
- Creative Artistic practice (including a belief in universal ability)
- Critical social analysis
- Commitment

Bartlett (2009) described the previous 30 years of community dance activity in the UK. In that time, the main objective – of widening participation in dance – had not altered. He notes that the values of person centred practice, inclusivity and arts as empowerment have been consistent over the history of community dance practice.

Phelan (2008) questions whether attempting to define community arts practice is useful as such boundary marking succeeds to excluding some practice and making other practice change in an attempt to conform to the standards. Phelan prefers to look at the activity of people coming together (much like

Wenger's (1998) community of practice) to negotiate what community arts practice should look like for them. It is community arts because they are performing as community arts.

2.6 Performativity

Schechner (2013) describes 'performativity' as a difficult term to define as it has been used by different authorities for a range of meanings. For Schechner, an underpinning idea of performativity is how 'reality' is a social construction. Performativity is a sense that there is no essential 'I': an individual has to work to produce (and re-produce) their identity and sense of self (Madison, 2012). Butler famously used the term in relation to the creation (and recreation) of gender. Gender is not an innate part of us (something we are), it is a practice we have to continually work at (something we do) (Lloyd, 2007). It has also been used to describe how we construct race (Mahtani, 2002) and sexual identity (McDermott, 2006). A performative act requires both actors/performers and spectators/audience (Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg, 2002a). In this thesis, I consider age a performative act (alongside being socially imposed and embodied). Also, the dancers learn, from each other, how to perform being a member of either of the groups.

2.7 Creativity

In this thesis, art making and creativity are used interchangeably; since my community arts practice concentrates on the creative process of art making rather than the outcome or product, creativity and art making are the same thing. In dance, since the turn to the post-modern in the 1960s, there is a broad acceptance of what is dance and what can it be (I am aware that the post-modern in dance is different to the post-modern in philosophy which is different again from other fields such as architecture). The Judson Dance Theater is referenced several times through this thesis but the work they produced stretched the boundaries of what is dance to include all types of movement, all sorts of performance spaces and many different bodies as dancers.

Hanna (1987) defines dance as

> (1) purposeful, (2) intentionally rhythmical, and (3) culturally
> patterned sequences of (4a) nonverbal body movements (4b)
> other than ordinary motor activities, (4c) the motion having
> inherent and aesthetic value. (Hanna, 1987:19)

Of course, so many post-modern dance pieces confound this definition by using walking as part of the choreography (for example works by Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton or William Forsythe). Additionally, Hanna (1987) states that the aesthetic qualities are recognisable to the culture from which the dance comes. This is, again, may not be observable for some post-modern dance that a general audience may find challenging to consider dance.

Dissanayake (1992) reminds us of the obvious but not frequently mentioned truth that engaging with art we enjoy feels good, sometimes in a whole body, sensuous way. She continues that this is the first indicator that art is a biological need that has evolved with our species over millions of years. (The second indicator is that people are prepared to invest a lot of time and energy into creating art.)

Working with creativity or art making without returning to a piece is much like the process of improvisation. Kratus (1996) defines improvisation (in relation to music performance) as intentional, in the moment (with no chance to rehearse, repeat or revise) and where the performer is free to choose any pitch or rhythm within limits set either by the performer or designed into the instrument. Nachmanovitch (1990) describes improvisation both as free play and the act of surrender: letting go of expectations and tuning in to the moment. Perrin et al. (2008) conceptualise play in many forms using a wide range of literature from psychology, zoology and theology. They conclude that the best practitioner (they are theorising high quality dementia care) is one that can facilitate a 'playful encounter' with their clients (Perrin et al., 2008:82). Being playful in relation to another means having a strong sense of self and being open, accepting and receptive to another. My way of facilitation is explored in the next section.

2.8 Facilitation

When leading community arts workshops, I feel the most important requirement is to make the dancers feel comfortable and confident enough to be able to engage in creative activity. Indeed, Creech et al. (2014) suggest that the skills involved in facilitation (such as interpersonal skills such as enthusiasm and organization and non-verbal modelling, allowing for collaboration with participants rather than didactic models of leadership and flexibility to accommodate skills and interests of participants) may be more important than the content for community arts work with older people. Initial, formal training in leading community arts is unusual (despite calls from authorities such as Moss and O'Neill, 2009) and my arts practice draws on a wide range of trainings. Prior to undertaking this research, the ideas underlying my arts practice were unconscious and unquestioned. Here, I attempt to pick out the crucial elements of my facilitation practice and tie it into the existing literature. This chapter has already introduced well-being, community and creativity which are a part of the groups, but not necessarily solely originating from my practice. Person centred practice, reflective and somatic practice are topics I have received training on and actively employ in my community arts and health work. I turn to these next.

2.8.1 Person Centred Practice

I originally trained as a teacher in post 16 and community education and that was where I first met the person centred work of Carl Rogers.

Carl Rogers developed person centred practice from his work in counselling practice (Thorne and Sanders, 2013). It is important to note that the sessions that I run are not therapy, nor am I a therapist (or a counsellor). However, it is accepted that many people find dance therapeutic. Rogers developed six core conditions (Tudor et al., 2004; Casemore, 2006) that enable an individual to realise their best self: this goal is in line with community arts and health practice.

1) Two people are in relationship with each other. This is evident in the dance sessions through the interactions between the dance artist and the dancers throughout the session.

2) One person must recognise a lack in their life. This is little emphasised in the community arts practice but the dancers have to decide to come and make an effort to get to the session (some groups, for example, in institutions, however, participants get little choice about attending)

3) The other person must be experiencing 'congruence', there needs to be an honestness about their feelings. This might be the most difficult condition to fit neatly with the experience in community arts and health provision. Casemore (2006) describes it as have a full knowledge of our own feelings and being prepared to share what we know of our experience. It reminds me of witnessing in authentic movement where a witness has awareness of the other they are seeing and the self they are experiencing (Adler, 2002).

4) Working with 'unconditional positive regard'. I wish I could claim to work 'without judgment, condition or evaluation' (Tudor et al., 2004) but that would be dishonest. However, I can say that I am accepting of any offer of creativeness without casting judgement

5) Working with 'empathic understanding' is, according to Casemore (2006), more than having a sense of how someone is feeling. It is having an understanding of the other's frame of reference and being able to share that understanding. I would generally not try to articulate any such framework but I do attempt to demonstrate my understanding through my planning of activities and choice of music.

6) Both parties have an understanding that conditions four and five are achieved. I believe this condition is demonstrated through the dancers returning to the session and fully engaging with the work because they have the sense of safe space.

In 1969, Rogers applied person-centred practice to classrooms in 'Freedom to Learn'. In the book (I am quoting the third edition), he writes that he does not care much about teaching, what excites him is facilitating other people's learning (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994). This resonates closely with the guide to language that opened this chapter. Rogers lists some qualities necessary for a successful facilitator:

- Realness – similar to the condition of congruence, there is a genuineness about a good facilitator, an honestness that allows the facilitator to be seen as a human being with a full range of emotions, both good and bad.

- 'Prizing, Acceptance, Trust' (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994:156) – overlapping with unconditional positive regard, this is a sense that the learner is a separate being from the facilitator and worthwhile in her own right and valued for her uniqueness, for her faults and fears as well as her successes.

- 'Empathic understanding' (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994:157) – having an understanding (or an attempt to understand as in the mechanism of Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 2003)) of how a person is feeling and what might be behind that. Attempting to gain an understanding of an individual rather than an evaluation or judgement of that person is key here

Rogers then continues by describing how a facilitator must be in the process of facilitating learning. He first describes 'a puzzlement' (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994:158) meaning a questioning attitude, especially if the facilitator is feeling less than pleasant feelings about a learner or a situation ('realness is the most important of the attitudes mentioned, and it is not accidental that this attitude was described first.' (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994:158)). He gives an example of a teacher sharing with her young students that she was distressed by the mess in the classroom and wondered if there was a solution. Which leads to the second way of being, having trust in fellow humans. The teacher in the example had trust that she could share her feelings with her class and that her concern could be dealt with, and faith that her children would be able to come up with solution that would resolve her discomfort. The final way of being is to be comfortable with not knowing, since Rogers was mainly writing about (and for) teachers who were familiar with didactic teaching, trusting learners to be responsible for their own learning could be considered a leap of faith. Facilitators newly adopting this style (or working with a group new to this style

of learning) would have to trust in the process and wait and see what the results would be. Rogers, in his book, paints a picture that leap and the ground will appear but with so much of a learner's life formed outside of the classroom I am not sure that this can be guaranteed. (I suspect that Rogers would suggest I am not yet comfortable with not knowing!)

Throughout my teacher training (in all, I attended three years part time to achieve C&G 7307, 7407[5] and PGCE), I was constantly chastised by tutors on the course for not planning more thoroughly, for example, not scripting my teacher speak for a session. In Brandes and Ginnis (1986) book 'A Guide to Student-Centred Learning', I found permission to respond to my learners on a personal level, assuming them to be socially and historically situated people rather than clean slates or empty vessels that a curriculum should simply be poured into. The message that relationships could be built between a facilitator and a learner and that relationship could engender trust that a learner could be relied on to learn what they needed to (which may or may not be related to the curriculum) felt revolutionary, for me, at the time, and is a lesson I have clung to fiercely through my teaching and community dance careers.

2.8.2 Reflective practice

The PGCE[6] training was an in service course meaning that we were teaching alongside the course. For each teaching session we delivered, we were required to complete a reflective journal, capturing critical incidents and suggesting learning points from the incident. The course module was based on the writing of Schön (1991). Reflective journaling was also a key feature of the Leading Dance with Older People certificate[7], we needed to examine our

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[5] City and Guilds 7307 and 7407- Certificate in Further Education Teaching –Manchester College of Arts and Technology – 2001-2003

[6] Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Post Compulsory) – University of Manchester – 2003-2005

[7] Level Three, National Open College Network – Lincolnshire Dance – 2006

learning experience on the course as well as on our community dance placement.   I have used the term 'critical incident' to refer to something, as described by Mason (2002), that happens during a session that disturbs the habitual way of being. It is also key that the something is both noticed and marked (i.e. the individual has the ability to recall the noticing at a later stage). As Angelides (2001) explains, critical incidents do not need to be dramatic moments with earth shattering consequences, they are merely the normal interactions within a setting that a practitioner/researcher has deemed worthy of note. For example, if I am explaining the structure of an improvisation exercise, a comment from a dancer or their physical response may indicate they have approached the task in a way I was not expecting. If I make a mental note of the incident, at some point shortly after the session I can reflect on the critical incident and examine the assumptions or structures that surrounded the interaction (Tripp, 2012). In an exchange around explaining a creative activity, I may have to question my expectations or the different possible ways of understanding the language I had used. As Tripp (2012) notes, this is a highly subjective process: an incident is deemed critical because I attached a value to it in that moment, it is possible that another observer might not identify a moment in the same way.

In discussing reflective practice, Schön (1991) introduces two concepts: knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action. There is much professional knowledge that is held tacitly. When asked, a person can struggle to describe what they are doing or how they know a set of circumstances. 'Knowledge-in-action' is not the application of intelligence but the demonstration of competence by completing the task. 'Reflecting-in-action' is the ability to assess action mid-process and adjust.

As a professional repeats their practice they become more familiar with the type of work they are specialising in and become more adept. But they also gain a more narrow focus and may lose an oversight of where their work fits in with a gestalt or holistic view. Although, as Wenger (1998) notes, a person's practice

is given meaning by its social and historical location, so that all practice is social practice even if that viewpoint is lost by the practitioner.

> 'Further, as a practice becomes more repetitive and routine, and as knowing-in-practice becomes increasingly tacit and spontaneous, the practitioner may miss important opportunities to think about what he is doing. … Through reflection, he can surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experience of a specialized practice, and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he may allow himself to experience.' (Schön, 1991: 61)

Schön gives examples of a banker who makes a judgement not to invest in a foreign business but on initial examination cannot explain how he came to that conclusion, a doctor seeing a combination of diseases not covered by textbooks and two sets of teachers trying to understand the origins of student struggles.

> In each instance, the practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he fins uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomena before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in this behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomena and a change in the situation. (Schön, 1991: 68)

Hence 'reflecting-in-action' is a state where a practitioner is primed to note critical incidents, the practitioner then can either modify practice in the moment (as per Schön) or reflect on the incident later to increase understanding and apply to practice in the future (as per Mason). McGregor (2011) notes five areas that a beginning teacher may choose to pay attention to: subject knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, educational values and personal identity. For this thesis, the subject is dance and the curriculum contains creativity and well-being. These understandings do not necessarily slot into existing theoretical discourses in the field of practice, real life does not often fit neatly into theoretical concepts. Since my community arts practice is not the product of a well defined course, this thesis will attempt to reflect on my practice, to discover more about the thoughts underpinning the work and to see where that fits into the wider theory of working with older people.

2.8.3 Somatic practice

The final course to impact my arts practice, before commencing this research, was a Masters level course in Dance and Somatic Well-being at University of Central Lancashire in 2009-10. Williamson and Brierley (2009) note the difference between the use in the literature of the verb 'somatic' which refers to any body based practice and the noun 'somatics' which refers to a narrower set of body based activities where first person experience is precedent. In my sessions, taking a somatics approach means taking time for dancers to attend to their body and embodied sensations; a typical technique I use is a body scan where a dancer closes their eyes and notices sensations as they mentally work from scalp to toes.

A phenomenological approach is utilised by some key somatic dance practitioners. Phenomenology is a research approach that is grounded in an individual's personal experience (Lawthom and Tindall, 2011). Olsen (1998) takes a phenomenological approach to the study of anatomy by exploring the experience of the tissues of the body, not just studying them on the pages of a text book. Hartley (1989) describes Body-Mind Centering as taking a similar lived approach to evolutionary and developmental movement patterns. The work of Carl Rogers is also rooted in the phenomenological tradition as he emphasises the primacy of the individual's experience (over the knowledge of an 'expert') (Thorne and Sanders, 2013).

2.9 Arts and Health

Arts and health is a wide, encompassing term. It takes in many different modalities, from environmental design in healthcare settings through passive audience activities through to more active participatory projects. Arts and health activities can take place in hospitals (Hume, 2010), GP surgeries (Everitt and Hamilton, 2003:9), outside spaces (Everitt and Hamilton, 2003:31), and

community centres (Hui and Stickley, 2010). Arts and health projects can involve people at any stage of the life course, from babies in the womb (Staricoff and Clift, 2011:11) to end of life care (Kennett, 2000). The art in arts and health projects can take many forms: photography (Baker and Wang, 2006), poetry (McArdle and Byrt, 2001), singing (Skingley and Bungay, 2010). When the art form is dance, many different genres have been used: ballet (Houston and McGill, 2013), tango (McKinley et al., 2008), folk (Eyigor et al., 2009) and creative dance (Osgood et al., 1990).

There are many different ways that community arts can impact well-being. For physical health, singing can improve subjective evaluation of breathing capacity (Skingley and Bungay, 2010), can reduce falls and doctor visits (Cohen et al., 2006) and dancing can strengthen the muscles used in balancing (and hence falls prevention) (Eyigor et al., 2009, Houston and McGill, 2013).

Smith (2003:14) reproduces and develops a diagram representation of the key dimensions in arts and health projects (figure 1). Work that combines community dance practice and arts and health is on the art side of the vertical dimension but can work along the full length of the social to individual scale.
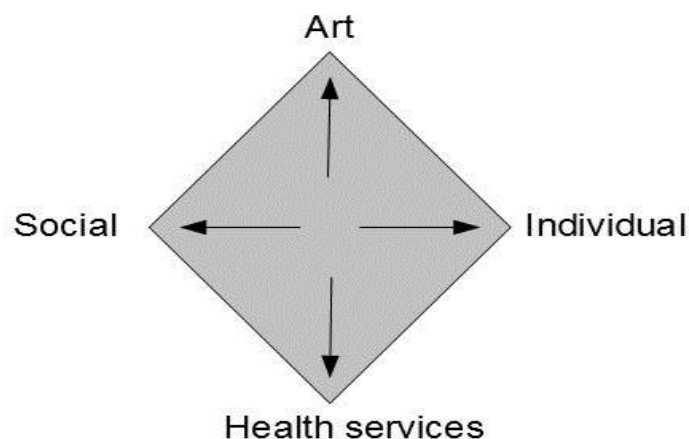
Figure 1 -   Key dimensions in arts/health from Smith (2003:14)

Clift (2012:120) writes that the requirement for 'robust' research in arts and health is 'incontestable' but later in the paper he notes that the type of large scale, comparative research he is advocating answers the questions 'do they work … does intervention A work more effectively than intervention B, and are interventions cost-effective?' (Clift, 2012: 123). Questions such as *how* does it work, will people use it and 'above all the experiences of participants' (Clift, 2012: 123) require a qualitative approach.

Fancourt and Joss (2014) have created a framework for researching arts and health practice to aid in achieving Clift's (2012) call for more robust evidence. Whilst the authors attempt to reassure researchers that a randomised controlled trial is not the only useful research to be done in arts and health, I am still uncomfortable with the reference to the 'arts intervention': the use of the word intervention suggests a short term/fixed term amount of arts to be accessed before returning to 'normal'. I would prefer working with a model that advocated a lifelong involvement with arts and culture as defined more broadly (Devlin, 2010).

Additionally, there are questions around whether biomedical models of health are appropriate for arts and health work. Several authors (White, 2006; Putland, 2008; Broderick, 2011; Parkinson and White, 2013) consider social models of health, like the concept of well-being met earlier in this chapter, to be more appropriate when researching community arts and health practices. Raw et al. (2012) cite Angus (2002) and White (2010) who both argue that trying to prove the benefit of arts and health practice by using medical models of health is to ignore much of what makes this work valuable; the gentle shifts that social science research is more attune to. This places arts and health in opposition to arts therapy which use biomedical models of diagnosis and treatment (Broderick, 2011).

Raw et al. (2012) also refer to community arts and health practice as oppositional to 'professional' arts therapy. Arts therapies have codes of practices, bodies of representation and protected titles that are only accessible to individuals who successfully complete postgraduate courses at a small

selection of universities. Of course, community arts and health practice has none of these things.

Dickson-Swift et al (2008) use the word 'professional' to mean not showing (felt) emotions. Foley (1998) uses 'professional' to mean speaking with a non-colloquial voice. I would prefer to be the sort of professional that is authentic: both of these definitions appear to be putting on an act or some sort of deception. I believe a professional arts and health practitioner speaks in a way that communicates with the artists in the group and embraces emotions because we are working with feeling, thinking human beings not just bits of them.

Cohen et al. (2006) devote three pages of their journal article to statistical analysis of the outcomes of a project to demonstrate the benefits of using arts with older people but the only reference to the contents of the workshops is that they were high quality workshops led by a professional conductor. So the calculations are replicable but the intervention employed is not.

Bungay, Clift and Skingley (2010) review a singing for older people project that covered 26 singing groups (with a total of 369 singers). The groups appear to be very much facilitator led (although references to the seating arrangements so that everyone can make eye contact and the conversation and laughter suggest that it is not dominated by 'teacher-talk'). Tasks were designed to be cognitively challenging and would lead to either shared sense of achievement if successful or shared laughter if not. The authors suggest that some of the social benefit of the activity comes from having to take an active part to ensure a successful group outcome. Interestingly three quarters of participants have musical experience and the tasks are set to be challenging so that the participants can fail. This would suggest that the participants in this project need a certain level of skill and ability to access the group and challenge my proposal that community arts and health practice is inclusive.

Greaves and Farbus (2006) show decreased depression and increased social support as outcomes in their research. But in their study of an arts and health

intervention, the individual participant got to choose their own creative or cultural activity so there is no detail, beyond a list of example activities, as to what a participant might have done to improve their well-being. Osgood et al. (1990) provide a rare example of a fairly detailed account (within the constraints of journal article length) of the content of the dance sessions studied. McKinley et al. (2008) also provide details of the tango and walk intervention groups. It is seemingly detailed but it is the same length as the description of the ballet sessions in Houston and McGill's (2013) study. I have attended training with the dance facilitators[8] in Houston and McGill's research and I know that the seemingly detailed description is insufficient for even an experienced ballet teacher to be able to reproduce the session. I wonder if this is partly for copyright reasons or to protect the integrity of the model (so it is only possible to deliver the intervention if you have had training in the method rather than just reading a short report). Another possibility is that since most of the articles are authored by someone other than the artist delivering the intervention, there may be an assumption that the information provided is sufficient. This thesis will not attempt to describe the entirety of my arts practice but, in questioning the foundations and assumptions underlying the practice, will hope to bring clarity to what happens in community arts and health practice.

2.10 Research Aims

This chapter has established a frame of feminist gerontology, embodiment and well-being. It has noted the practice of community based arts and health work (as I do it) is made up of person centred, reflective and somatic practices. As demonstrated in the final section, current arts and health research does not detail the practice of the arts and health provision. This research intends to find out more about what happens in community arts and health provision. I can now derive four stated aims. This research intends will:

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[8] English National Ballet, Ballet for Parkinson's, 2 day training, Oxford, February 2013

1) Increase understanding of the experience of older people participating in community arts and health provision
2) Develop understanding of the experience of an artist leading community arts and health provision
3) Consider some of the thinking underpinning the community dance artist's practice when working with older people
4) Develop a methodology suitable for capturing the fullness of the experience of working with community arts and health.

The next chapter, 'Methodology', will examine how these research aims will be explored.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The previous chapter presented the literature that described the conceptual framework the research sits within. This chapter details a research process that is compatible with that framework and will enable me to achieve my aims. The chapter begins with selecting an appropriate methodology. It then provides a brief introduction to ethnography and practice led research. The chapter then moves on to describe the methods and processes used in collecting the findings. The next section introduces the settings and the dancers involved in the research and intends to paint a vivid description of what the day to day reality of the research looked like. Finally, for this chapter, I consider the ethics of the research, including exiting the research groups.

3.1 Emergence of a question, Emergence of a methodology

This section describes how my research aims guided the choice of methodologies. As already demonstrated in the previous chapter, the outcomes of arts and health work are relatively well researched (for example, Cohen et al., 2006, Bungay, 2010, Eyigor et al., 2009). What is less clear, however, is what processes occur to achieve those outcomes. I wanted to study what happens within a community dance group; how the group 'works'. I needed a methodology that could capture something of the experience of being in an arts and health group and the experience of being the community dance artist delivering these sessions. The research questions, as explained at the end of the previous chapter, became 'what happens in an arts and health session' and 'what is influencing that happening'.

For me, this research was a messy improvised practice; much like the magpie-like community artist taking whatever technique or approach they think might be appropriate for a group or activity (Kuppers, 2007), the research took an eclectic approach to defining its methodology. I wanted to examine what was happening in sessions in a way that respected the dancers as authorities on

their own experience but also had the ability to question unexamined, underlying assumptions. I also required a methodology to be capable of holding multiple forms of representation as my dance practice became, not just the subject of my research but part of my methodology. Hence, this thesis embraces multiple forms of ethnography alongside a practice led research approach. In the next section I will discuss approaches to ethnography, but first I will examine the methodologies of other arts and health researchers.

Bungay, Clift and Skingley (2010) and Hallam et al. (2014) used questionnaires to collect data from older adults in singing groups. Although there is suggestion that observation of sessions was also used, questionnaires are limited by only being able to access the researcher's conceptualisation of the session. For example, I know of one dancer who attended a session with another practitioner because she enjoyed the sociability of the minibus that was sent to collect the participants, I doubt a questionnaire about her experience at the session would be flexible enough to elicit that information.

Houston and McGill (2013) and Westheimer et al. (2015) used mixed methods to examine dance for people with Parkinson's in the UK and the US respectively. Houston and McGill (2013) used quantitative measures and ethnography to capture both the rehabilitative effects of dance on the Parkinson's symptoms and the experience of being in the sessions. Westheimer et al. (2015) used similar quantitative measures and post session interviews with participants. Both sets of researchers concluded that the mix of qualitative and quantitative data was necessary to develop research in this area. However, since my research is not dealing with a specific health condition I will not employ the quantitative health measures. The next section introduces the methodology I will employ.

3.2 Ethnography

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggest that ethnography is difficult to define because of its long history and adoption by many researchers from different disciplines. Through the years it has been a narrative description of a culture or

society, later accounts would attempt to include something of the outside forces that might shape these communities (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Denscombe (2010) describes 'idiographic' ethnographies (descriptive accounts of a highly specific situation) and 'nomothetic' accounts (researchers attempt to illuminate wider theories about societies or the human condition through an ethnographic account) as being at either ends of a continuum: most ethnographies sit somewhere between these two extremes. Pollner and Emerson (2001:118) describe the method of ethnography as 'embodied presence in the social world'. For me, ethnography is simply the study of people in interaction, both with place and with others, and that is how I use it.

Whilst a neat definition of ethnography may be elusive, it is agreed that ethnographies usually include many similar elements (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Skeggs describes ethnography as a research practice that often includes

> fieldwork that will be conducted over a *prolonged period of time;* utilizing different research techniques; conducted *within the settings* of the participants, with an understanding of how the context informs the action; *involving the researcher in participation* and observation; involving an account of the development of relationships between the researcher and the researched and focusing on how experience and practice are part of wider processes. (Skeggs, 2001:426 - emphasis in original)

Ethnography is then, evidently, an appropriate methodology for this study. Comparing Skeggs' (2001) description of an ethnographic method to my investigation of my arts and health practice: I wanted to collect data over a long period of time to enable me to gain access 'the complex interweaving of events, interactions, and interpretations' (O'Reilly, 2009: 210). I was collecting data at the sessions rather than taking the participants out for interview or other data collection. I was certainly an active participant in the session and the relational aspects of the sessions were key to the success of both the sessions and the research. I was using my insider status to be my own key

informant (O'Reilly, 2009). The research inclined more towards the ideographic side of Descombe's (2010) continuum (that is, a specific account of a group situated firmly in a place and time).

Contrary to traditional ethnographic research, I am not going to a foreign, distant or exotic culture to immerse myself full time for an extended period and then report back to others who have no knowledge of this strange phenomenon (Pink, 2009). I am putting my own life and social practices under the microscope and examining my own situation and the people around me. Ellis considers ethnography, not as a method, but as a way of life (Ellis, 2004). For Ellis, it is a way of both seeing our world and 'a way of being in the world as an involved participant' (Ellis, 2004:26). The outcome of an ethnography is a co-produced detailed description of an experience of the world (Runswick-Cole, 2011). This is often called a 'thick description' after Ryle and Geertz (Ponterotto, 2006). 'Thick description' is not merely a surfeit of detail, but must include the researchers interpretation of the action described. It must include sufficient detail for a reader to consider the interpretation plausible (Ponterotto, 2006).

Other researchers with similar studies to myself have also used ethnography to study community groups. Fisher (2013) conducted a participant-observer ethnography of several groups connected to a church in the North of England including an older people's group. Raw (2013) investigated arts and health practice in North East and South West England and Mexico City. Raw is a former arts and health practitioner but her PhD studied the practice of other practitioners. James (2012) studied youth identity in East London through working as a volunteer youth worker for two years. He recounts the development of his research, entering the field with the 'wrong' question, and having to find courage to allow the participants to guide the researcher towards a more accurate portrayal of the youth experience. Croose (2014) used ethnography to examine his own practice as a facilitator of community arts (his art form is carnival). Croose's role as a practising artist plants him very much at the centre of the ethnography, he is not like the early anthropologist

ethnographers, sat on the fringes of the activity. Finally, Paulson writes that she used ethnography alongside narrative interviews when studying dance groups for older people because it offers 'greater ecological validity' (Paulson, 2011: 148) due to the participant nature of ethnographic research.

Ethnography has the potential to be innovative and creative. Hopkins (2008) suggests that since feminist research has been marginalised by the academy, women's studies are more accommodating to improvised and emergent methodologies, including creative or novel approaches to ethnography. Some social gerontologists believe that we must use 'non-scientific' (Bengston et al., 2005b:7) innovative methods to investigate ageing as traditional quantitatively orientated research risks losing so much of the individual experience of ageing that it could become 'seriously flawed and inadequate' (Bengston et al., 2005b:7).   It is tempting to assume the idea of ethnography being a creative act is new, probably coinciding with the turn to performance in qualitative research or Denzin and Lincoln's seventh moment. However, thirty years ago, Thornton (1985) recalled Malinowski was asking readers to use their imagination whilst reading his ethnography of the Trobriand in the 1920s. Creativity occurs in my research project both in the use of creative methodology to explore some of the data and in the emergent nature of the methodology. Barndt (2008) reminds us the key skill of the artist, that is helpful for research, is the ability to engage in deep listening; to be still and allow information to flood through from the source. Denzin notes the potential for change in both creativity and ethnography 'Ethnography like art is always political.' (Denzin, 2000:403). Hayes et al. (2014) go one step further, however and suggest that ethnographers, instead of writing about how things are, become creative and write of how things could be. Buckland (2010) discusses the development of dance ethnography and how, as a field, the creative potential of technology, particularly video, is underused. This thesis integrates web based video to support and augment the writing and arts based thinking as will be explored in *Dancing*.

Ethnography is not innately feminist but it can be a very useful method for a feminist researcher (Skeggs, 2001). Examining the lived experience of individuals, especially if looking at a mundane ordinary experience, can be a feminist standpoint as it challenges the patriarchal shaping of a researcher as an omniscient, omnipotent observer (Smith, 1999). Visweswaren (2003) calls for an ethnography that does not seek to smooth over differences between the researcher and the Other but to note and explore these differences This work would help shine a light on our unspoken privilege. (Visweswaren is particularly referring to Western women working with 'traditional' cultures but the argument could be applied to people with educational privilege working in communities where that privilege may not exist or investigators with a privilege of youth). In many ways, this approach to writing the Other reflects the concern of critical gerontology that our work should not just be to try and combat ageism by writing "but see, **they** are just like **us**" (for example see Calasanti, 2008). Similarly, Denzin (2000) makes a call for an ethnography that is sensitive to others and shows awareness of the role of the researcher's relationships within the studied reality. McNamara (2009) notes that the relationship in feminist ethnography, between the researcher and the researched, is often a very close one and that the end of the research may need careful managing. How this researcher handled 'exiting the field' is dealt with in the ethics section later in this chapter.

Pollner and Emerson's (2001) use of the word 'embodied' to describe the process of ethnography excites me as a practitioner with a background in somatic movement practices. My research is strongly embodied throughout, as will be demonstrated in later chapters: the writing is keenly aware that the research is happening through bodies, both dancing bodies and writing bodies, that are aware of their body-ness and the work investigated by the research intends to aid the participants become more aware of their bodies. Blumenfeld-Jones (2008) writes how a dance based methodology uniquely gives a research

perspective from inside the living body. Whilst I disagree with Goffman (1959) that we perform in some situations and return to our natural state in private, I have an awareness, whilst I am always 'me', how I perform 'me' changes depending on who I'm co-performing 'life' with at that moment. Denzin describes more accurately my own sense of embodiment:

> Of course there is no essential self or private, or real self behind the public self. There are only different selves, different performances, different ways of being a gendered person in a social situation. (Denzin, 2001: 28)

Where writers attempt to define ethnography in the literature, it is often closely followed by warnings. For example, Shaffir (1999) warns a potential ethnographer that whilst ethnography is indeed a subjective experience, caution must be taken to ensure focus remains on the culture being studied rather than the researcher. But as Denzin (2003) reminds us, we cannot study experience directly, only our co-performance of it. Also, some ethnographers, such as Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner, work solely with the subjective personal experience and produce work they call autoethnography. Madison (2006) calls for a critical ethnography, that whilst aware of the positioning of the self, reduces the emphasis on the self to allow for a full, embodied being-with that really sees and "pay[s] attention" (Madison, 2006:322) to the Other.

Ethnography, as I have described it so far, may appear to be an ideal qualitative research methodology, however, it is not without its drawbacks. As Madison (2003) reminds us, we must be cautious about assuming it is possible to speak 'for' others but we must not let that caution drive us to be silent. We must respectfully, artistically and politically present the stories so that our audience has a chance to be "disturbed and inspired" (Madison, 2003:479) by stories from lives different to their own. Madison discusses how subjects of research can feel affirmed and empowered by seeing their stories performed for an audience. Conquergood (1998) shares his mistrust of reification of text

(Madison calls it 'scriptocentrism' (2007:828)) since text is not fit to convey the subtleties of non-verbal utterances. Conquergood (1998) also suggests that some ideas are too important and too dangerous to be held in text (referring to historical Black emancipation). He also refers to 'performance-sensitive ways of knowing' (1998:26) that have the capability to speak in polyvocal ways and trouble the establishment and lead to greater understanding.

As Visweswaren (2003) noted that an ethnographer or anthropologist cannot assume that a participant would be willing to talk about their lives, Conquergood writes "Oppressed people everywhere must watch their back, cover their tracks, hide their feelings, and veil their meanings." (Conquergood, 1998:30). This creates a necessity for the researcher to interrogate their differences with the researched even whilst trying to build rapport. Michelle Fine (1994) terms this 'working the hyphen'. Fine calls for a dialogue between the researcher and the researched to make explicit whose story is being told and why? And whose story is not being told and to what cost? Thoughts of negotiating my own role in the field is touched on in *Reflecting*. Not only can we not assume that a participant in the research (and in that I would include the researcher) is will in to reveal all about a subject, the assumption that that which is known through the body is available to translate to language is also contestable (Stinson, 2004).

3.3 Methods

This section briefly introduces the four research methods that have informed this research: performance ethnography, institutional ethnography and autoethnography and practice-led research.

3.3.1 Performance ethnography

Performance ethnography follows the work of Norman Denzin and Dwight Conquergood who view ethnography as the study of public performances and

the sharing of those performances as a political act (Denzin, 2003). Performances are interactions between actors that have a purpose (Denzin, 2003). For Denzin, and the purpose of this research, these actors are people involved in everyday occurrences. The use of performance as an alternative to traditional scholarly writing is an attempt to connect emotionally with a reader and to be an act of resistance against a patriarchal, colonial, academic discourse (Conquergood, 2002).

> "Using the methods of narrative collage, performance writing shows, rather than tells. It is writing that speaks performatively enacting what it describes. It is writing that does what it says it is doing, by doing it. Performative writing 'is an inquiry into the limits and possibilities of the intersection between speech and writing … [it] evokes what it names' (Phelan, 1998: 13)." (Denzin, 2001: 36)

Both Denzin (2003) and Conquergood (2007) see performance ethnography as a dialogue between the ethnographer and the community they seek to understand

Jones (2002) sets out principles for developing performance from ethnography field word: for sharing 'the bodily understandings' (Jones, 2002: 8).

1 – Performance is around a question rather than attempt to offer authenticity

2 – Performance is a collaboration between the researcher and the community. The researcher must remain in service to the community (as Conquergood (2007) notes, the researcher is in debt to the community who are giving their time and knowledge).

3 – The researcher must be explicit with reflexivity of how they have influenced the shape of the performance

4 – The act of using multiple voices dissipates the authority of the all-knowing researcher

5 – Audience participation marks performance ethnography apart from other forms of ethnography or representation. (I wonder if now, in 2015,

digital participation means that performance ethnography does not have to be live in the way Jones was working back in 2002)

6 – A performance ethnographer needs to be continually aware of the balance of detachment and commitment and identity and difference (Conquergood 2007:61)

These principles are enacted in the work in *Dancing*.

3.3.2 Institutional ethnography

Institutional ethnography developed from the work of Dorothy Smith to create a sociology for women (Smith, 1999). It contends that everyday interactions are shaped by unseen forces of institutional practices of organisations and government (DeVault and McCoy, 2006). There are no set procedures for institutional ethnography, it is meant to be an open exploratory method, although it does have shared principles. Institutional ethnography must be aware that it can only conduct research through a socially constructed researcher and their social relations. What is written about only really exists between people in action; the concepts do not exist in isolation (Smith, 2006). Institutional ethnography is a sociology that starts with people's everyday activity rather than attempting to impose a pre-existing theory on those activities. It works in service of those people by expanding on their lived experiential knowledge of how things work locally (Smith, 2006). Smith additionally notes the difficulty of the institutional practices (of both research and the work under study) being consumed by the textual and almost obscuring the embodied practices that shape a setting but is aware that the textual is material as well as symbolic (Smith, 1999). Diamond (2006) researched the working practices of the nursing assistants in residential care for older people by becoming a nursing assistant, submitting himself to the ruling relations of the post and studied the work as he performed it. Institutional ethnography is key to this research as it makes the researcher consider the wider influences on the behaviour observed since it defines work very broadly as an activity they have (somehow, not necessarily formally) learned how to do and are required to perform this in their everyday lives (Campbell and Gregor,

2004). In particular, when examining the practice of both the researcher as artist and the researcher as researcher. Kennedy et al. (2010) studied the experience of women giving birth by examining both the women's practices and the healthcare professionals' practices. Mykhalovskiy and McCoy (2002) worked with people living with AIDs in the community to examine the work they did to manage their health.

3.3.3 Autoethnography

Autoethnography was defined by Spry (2001:710) as 'a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts'. This is not merely self-indulgent navel gazing (Pillow, 2003): this is a critical research method that challenges the traditions and assumption of the academy. Using the self as the site of research, a researcher examines how they interact with institutions or situations. Ellis and Bochner (2006: 433) describe autoethnography as 'a mode of inquiry, [that] was designed to be unruly, dangerous, vulnerable, rebellious, and creative'. Elsewhere, Ellis defines autoethnography as 'research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political.' (Ellis, 2004:xix)

Karen Barbour (2012) uses dance performance as part of her autoethnography work. She values her embodied knowledge and seeks creative ways to both access and share that knowing.

Autoethnography is useful here because the research examines my own position within the groups and seeks to understand more about my experience as the artist within groups. My position within the groups also gives rise to another method of researching the groups.

3.3.4 Practice led research

Whilst this thesis is mostly an ethnographic account of the dance sessions and my research of them, the practice of community dance is so prominent in the writing that the research can also be considered practice led. As Mäkelä (2007) writes 'the knowledge and the skills of a practising artist ... form a central part of the research process' (Mäkelä, 2007:157). Candy (2006) differentiates between practice-**based** research (where a produced artefact contributes to new understandings) and practice-**led** (where the new knowledge is about the practice). The practice led aspect was initially conceived as practice-based: facilitating creating dance work in the sessions by the participants. Through the project I was not confident in my skills in leading this type of work and worried about issues of protecting participants whilst wanting to share the work with a wide audience. Instead I turned to my personal movement practice of improvisational dance. The process and the results of this practice are explored in *Dancing*. Haseman (2006) positions practice-led research as different to both qualitative and quantitative research, citing both as problem led research. Haseman (2006) believes most practice-led researchers start not from a problem to solve but a practice to explore. This does neatly capture the experience of this thesis which starts from an area of research inquiry, which emerged from the practice, rather than a neat, narrow research question asked by outside policy concerns.

3.3.5 Entrechat

> *Entrechat* (From the Italian *intrecciare* – to weave). A [ballet] jump where the calves beat together and feet change position. *(Mackie, 1986: 119)*

The research aims intend to extend the understanding of the experience of being in the groups, for the participants and for the dance leader. The aims also include furthering understanding of the processes that guide the design and the delivery of the sessions. The three ethnographies employed in pursuit of these aims were not treated as individual methods, instead elements were

taken from each approach and combined to create the way of knowing that eventually resulted.

Performative ethnography means that we accept that there is no reality 'out there' that we can hope to understand, through either observation or through reflection on our experience. Each moment of the research is a performance of 'doing a dance group' or 'doing a research group' and the researcher is an integral part of that performance, simply through being present. Performative ethnography also offers the idea that there is knowledge that is not available to verbal thought. Jones (2002) describes performative ethnography as the study of culture as done through the body.

Institutional ethnography says that the actions and possibilities available to us in the space of investigation are shaped by outside practices. Like performative ethnography, it believes that mundane, ordinary experiences are worthy of investigation. Institutional ethnography began as a feminist methodology, and, like performative ethnography, operating as resistance to the patriarchal nature of the academy by deeming women's everyday/everynight activities as suitable sites for research (Smith,1999). However, whilst institutional ethnography began from the embodied knowledge of the situated informant /researcher (Smith, 1999), the practice of institutional ethnography is often concerned with textual artefacts in the research site (see for example, Turner, 2006) whereas performance ethnography is an embodied method and seeks to resist the scriptocentric nature of the academy.

Autoethnography is another way of exploring the contemporary and historical social forces working on me to shape my own practice as an artist, a researcher and as a mother. And, like the other two ethnographic methodologies, insists on the importance of examining the lived experience. Autoethnography commonly uses textual representations but can be more literary than traditional ethnography. There is already a precedent for researchers using performance or dance as a form of autoethnography (for example Jones, 1997; Barbour, 2012; Spry, 2001).

3.3.5.a Process

For any critical incident within either the dance session or the research process, there is a choice on how to record and then how to analyse that moment. As with Pink's (2009) sensory ethnography, there is no hierarchy of methods; whatever was judged to be the most appropriate tool, at the time, was used. If a critical incident happened in the dance session, then it was recorded by video and then I transcribed notes or I wrote a reflection on it. If the critical incident happened in the post session conversation, then it was recorded by Dictaphone and then, if the session was one of the conversations selected, the conversation was transcribed by the researcher. The choice of analysis was either thematic analysis in NVivo (if it appeared in the conversation transcript), thematic analysis of the video notes (by hand, not in NVivo), exploratory writing or creative movement. Other than how the conversation transcripts or video observation notes were handled, there was nothing inherent in an incident that would decide which method of analysis or record was most appropriate. Creative movement could only be created when I had access to adequate space and sufficient time. There were also instances of creative movement that were not video recorded. Reflective writing also required an uninterrupted stretch of time (although there are several entries that begin focusing on one theme and then note interruptions part way through) and, more importantly, were usually motivated by a critical incident that I thought may become clearer through the process of thinking/writing. Creative movement was generally used to either stimulate thinking (as I moved, what reflections relevant to the research came up) or to untie a problem that verbal thinking had not satisfactorily resolved. As already noted in section 1.3, the piece 'What Will Become' (section 6.4.1) was used to stimulate stagnant thinking. 'HDV0266' (section 6.4.5) is an example of knowing that was exclusively bodily held.

The next section explains how the structure of the thesis contains this melding of methods.

3.3.6 Matching ways of knowing with findings

Each findings chapter relies on different ways of knowing that map to the above methods. *Listening* (Chapter 4) relies on the transcripts of conversations between the dancers and myself and so is based on the voices of the dancers. The transcripts are treated as general ethnographic data. *Watching* (Chapter 5) relies on institutional ethnography and practice based research and uses my observation of video recordings of sessions, my reflections and the session plans as data. *Dancing* (Chapter 6) uses performance ethnography and practice led research and uses my movement practice as data.

This thesis is the culmination of a 13 month long relationship with the groups, Chapter 7 provides some of the incidents and happenings that shaped the thinking of the research and the eventual writing of the thesis. As Haverkamp (2005) notes, explicitly examining a researcher's relationship with participants and their professional practice allows for a reflection that may lead to better ethical decision making during research. Chapter 7 will additionally consider my practice as mother, which, whilst not professional, is a practice that has a large influence on both my practice as an artist and as a researcher.

Chapter 7 is also my response to Richardson's (1995) call for 'writing-stories': offering knowledge about how a text was written may give a reader another way to view a text. Much the same way my musical hero Glen Hansard likes to offer long stories on the background to song lyrics before performing in concert. Finally, Chapter 7 offers public knowledge about a private life (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998) and as such offers an autoethnographic lens on the research.

3.4 Processes

This section details how the research was conducted. As the work is highly situated and much of the practice is based on innate knowledge by the practitioner, it is not possible to provide an account that could be precisely

replicated. However, I attempt to articulate as much detail as possible of what happened.

3.4.1 Involvement / Contact

As already noted in the introduction, I struggled to recruit a group specifically for this research. Instead, a convenience sample of two groups I already had access to was used. These groups will be introduced below. Participants were part of the research only when the sessions were running or immediately after the session if they could stay to talk, no extra participation was required for the research. (Although it should be noted that some dancers evidently thought about the research and even discussed it with people from outside of the group, in between sessions.) They were only required to attend their own venue as normal: the groups did not meet and I did not meet participants elsewhere or at another time. The research period spanned 13 months from October 2013 to November 2014.

3.4.2 Recruitment

In the end, there was no specific recruitment for the research. The dance groups ran as normally and I approached members of the group and asked if they wanted to be part of the research. The Sittingham group had posters in the church hall, a local doctor's surgery and a butchers and also received a mention in the church magazine. The Crantock group was included on the timetable for the leisure centre and was on the website of both the leisure service and the community dance company that staffed the session.

When dancers arrived at the session, I collected personal data for each participant (contact details, emergency contact) and asked them to complete a short health questionnaire (see Appendix C). This was for the dance session (so everyone who wanted to join the dance session had to fill in even if they did not want to take part in the research) but was used to inform the research if the dancer consented. The contact information meant that I had the means to contact participants if the session had to be cancelled for some reason (for example, sickness of the dance artist or adverse weather condition). (The ethics

of data collecting is considered later in this chapter, in section 3.7). The health questionnaire was to support me in designing safe sessions for the dancers. The personal data for Crantock was kept by the other dance leader (as it was notionally 'her' class).

Once the datasheet was collected, I would then ask (the following week, for a new starter) a dancer if they wished to take part in my research. I gave them a participant information sheet and a consent form, let them read through it and suggested that they take a week to think about it bring it back to me. I made sure to tell everyone (and it was on the participant information sheet) that taking part in the research was optional, and that they were able to take part in the sessions without taking part in the research. No one declined to take part in the research, although one dancer at Crantock did say that she did not want to be recorded either by video or sound recorders. Whilst I respected this decision, I did wonder if it was motivated by a fear of the recordings being shared on the internet which was not my intention for the files at all. I said nothing for fear of me attempting to reassure her that the recordings would be kept private being understood, by her, as pressure to agree to recording.

3.4.3 Running the sessions

I planned and delivered the community dance sessions that were the basis of the ethnographic study just as I would for a standard freelance project. For each session, I prepared a session plan that detailed the activities, any props and the music I intended to use against suggested timings (a full session plan is in Appendix B, further information on the planning process is in *Watching*). Formally planning a session gave me the opportunity to check I had enough material to fill the allotted time, that the session was balanced in the areas of the body used (e.g. arms, legs), in the type of fitness being challenged (e.g. stamina followed by a balance or breathing activity), and leader directed versus dancer led activities.

The sessions ran once a week for each group, taking breaks for the summer and Christmas. Other holiday closures were negotiated with the group. A

typical session is described in section 3.5.2, a detailed analysis of the content of the session is provided in *Watching*.

After each session, I reflected on the process of planning, delivery and the content of the session through journal writing and/or improvised movement and use this to feedback into the planning of the next session.

3.4.4 Post session conversations

In an era of documentary and reality TV, society knows all about and knows itself through interview (Denzin, 2001). Denzin believes we need to view the interview less as a 'commodity' and more as a 'community' that we are part of (Denzin, 2001:24). He suggest that the interview is not a site for data excavation but a space 'for producing performance texts and performance ethnographies about self and society...' (Denzin, 2001:24). The interview is not a window onto the real world, it is a constructed contained performance that creates its own world. The implication for this thesis is that the dancers did not necessarily possess a construction of the session before we began the research and the experiences articulated here were constructed through the process of the research. Etherington (2004) suggests an interviewer must be ready to meet participants as they are situated in their personal situations and understand their role in constructing and continually reconstructing the interview narratives.

As such, the approach I took was to spend up to an hour after each session with dancers who were willing to stay for a conversation at the venue (the individual participants changed from week to week dependant on dancer's availability). Conversations were recorded by a Dictaphone (after gaining consent for taking audio recordings – see *Ethics* section 3.7) or pen and paper notes taken by the researcher both during the conversation and immediately afterwards. The conversations started with a prompt from the researcher but quickly took their own path. Fontana and Frey (2000:652) believe this approach can 'establish the widest range of meaning and interpretation for the topic'. At each recording I advised participants that they were free to choose their level of involvement with the research and reminded dancers not to share

other people's stories outside of the group. The recordings were transcribed by the researcher, examined for emerging themes and any points that could be fed back into the session planning process.

By the end of the research period, 25 conversations were conducted with the dancers at Sittingham and two with the dancers at Crantock. Crantock were more reluctant to stay behind if not all members were able to stay. In total, 11 interviews were transcribed. The conversations not transcribed were generally rejected because the conversations were mainly about other people and their experiences. For example on the 14/1/14, the dancers discussed children they had worked with from disadvantaged communities, which, whilst showing interesting attitudes towards people living with poverty, was deemed not relevant enough to invest the hours it would take type up the transcript. On the 25/2/14 they spent the interview discussing local history and art in historical buildings. Comments made by dancers during any session during the research period, that caught my attention, were captured in my journaling.

Figure 2 -   Always an ethnographer – some of my journals dating from 1997 to present day

3.4.5 Session review (Journaling)

As described above, I wrote detailed session plans for each session. If a critical incident caught my attention, then I would write my reflections, as stream of consciousness, either on computer screen or in a notebook. I would do this in the evening after the sessions or occasionally later in the same week if

something occurred to me a few days later. Dancers' reflections on the session were requested in the interviews. All this feedback was considered in planning the next session. The plan-deliver-reflect cycle continued throughout the research period.

3.4.6 Movement based reflection

A more detailed description of how individual pieces came into existence is provided in *Dancing*. However, in general, in my personal movement practice, I spent time sitting quietly (sometimes whilst driving to the venue I was using for filming the movement), mentally reviewing an aspect of my practice or a critical incident. I then moved freely and afterwards captured, in writing, any thoughts or images that occurred. I filmed the moving process. Recordings were stored on my personal hard drive and selectively uploaded to YouTube.

3.4.7 Videos of sessions

At Sittingham only (because one dancer withheld her permission to record the session), I would set up the video in one corner of the room and leave it to record from just before starting to just after the final activity. On one occasion, when I did not have a Dictaphone, it was also left on to record the post session conversation but was used for that section of the session purely as an audio record. The dancers did notice the video in the early stages of the research period and did occasionally mention it later in the year but for the most part, it was an unobtrusive aspect of the research process (Svendler Nielsen, 2012).

3.4.8 Process of Analysis

The process of analysis will be discussed in more detail at the start of each chapter of findings as it varied with each set of findings.

3.5 Participants

This section describes who took part in the research. Throughout the thesis, I use pseudonyms for people and places. The two groups I eventually used for the research were already established before I started my PhD. One group, the Sittingham group, I set up whilst working as a freelance dance artist in 2012 and, the second group, Crantock, I was contracted to deliver by Diamond Dance: a community dance company I worked for previously.

I have provided limited 'facts' about the two communities the groups are in for two reasons. Firstly, there are ethical considerations: too much demographic information could make the groups easily identifiable. Secondly, I feel knowing general information about the settings does not aid in understanding the particular individuals that make up the groups. As a compromise, I offer limited 'facts' about the area but most of the information about the groups will be offered an embodied, performative account of how it is to work in those communities in the following section. I offer a 'thick description' (Ponterotto, 2006) of my reflections of working in these places to enable the reader to have a vivid, lived sense of being in the settings and being with the participants.

Sittingham lies to the east of Crantock. It is a rural area, mainly affluent with small pockets of deprivation. It is a collection of villages with Sittingham being the administrative centre. Office for National Statistics (2001) identify the ward covering Sittingham and neighbouring villages as 17% of the population being aged 65 years and over, 97% identify as White (British or other) and 4% of people who describe their health as either bad or very bad.

Crantock is a township within Greater Manchester. There is a wide range of prosperity within a small area; a former Manchester overspill estate is two miles away from houses with indoor pools. According to data from the Office for National Statistics (2001) it has a higher proportion of older people (16%) than rest of the borough although that is largely in line with the rest of the country. It has a large proportion of white people (95%) compared with locally and nationally. 12% described their health as "not good" compared to a national

figure of 9%. 20% of the working age population of Crantock were claiming out of work benefits compared to 12% nationally.

All of the dancers (in both groups) were in their 60s or older, white British and lived local to the session location. There was a single male participant so, to avoid him being easily identified, female pseudonyms and pronouns will be used throughout for all participants.

3.5.1 The settings for the research

Sittingham

Driving to Sittingham is a very familiar experience. It is one of those lovely little villages, nestled high in the hills, that people like my parents love to come and visit on sunny weekends and wander amongst the quaint shops. The roads are narrow and parking is a continual nightmare. It is a lovely place to live, if you can afford it. And if you can afford it, you generally have a nice car or two. So there are a lot of cars. And roadworks. The church hall we use is up a tiny one way side street off the main road. The main corridor of the hall is full of posters and leaflets for various charities, local and international and letters thanking the church for their financial contributions to those charities. The dance session takes place in 'the coffee room'; the room where people sit during the many coffee mornings the church holds. The tables and chairs are arranged 'just so' for the coffee mornings (there's even a helpful diagram on the wall to aid in getting it right) but they need hauling about to make space for moving and dancing. I try to move as little furniture as possible as the dancers usually end up tidying them back up at the end. Occasionally, the room smells a little damp (the building has just celebrated its 100th anniversary) and all the windows must be opened fully (amazingly, for this type of building, the windows have not been painted shut).

The youngest participant is 69, the oldest in her late 80s. All the dancers worked outside of the home in professional roles. Four of them were teachers and two of those worked as headteachers and advisory teachers. All have been

married. Some still live with their husbands, others are divorced or widowed. Some have children (and grandchildren and great grandchildren), some do not, but family is important to all of them (see section 5.4.3).

All but one of the dancers still drive and have their own car. The dancer who does not drive gets a lift to the session with two of the other dancers. Mobility is important for independence, Grenier (2005) highlights how fear of using public transport (because of its unsuitability for fragile bodies) can create disability.

Crantock

A few years ago, a joint venture between the local council and a large supermarket meant that Crantock gained a new £15 million pound sports centre. In return, the supermarket gained the site of the town's old sports centre and civic hall.

I am not going to get too sentimental about losing the old buildings, I led sessions at the old sports hall and used the civic hall for many events, both were horribly dated. The sports hall in particular was completely unsuitable; it always reminded me of a bar in an old church hall, at the top of a narrow, twisting staircase, no air conditioning, no thoughtfully placed power sockets. The new building, however, is spectacular. It has a huge theatre and plentiful free car parking. The three storey building is glass fronted for the full height. The building looks like every other supermarket built public building, completely soul and charmless and devoid of anything that is recognisably Crantock. The entrance lobby is big enough to be disorientating. Fortunately, someone recognised the British need to queue so placed some ropes by the front desk. Now, no matter which part of the building they want, people are able to join a queue and feel as though they are in the right place. If you are joining the dance session, after queuing, you generally take a seat in the cafe area, just to the right of the reception desk. Sometimes, a single dancer (who has been in town for the morning) will have their lunch there. Nothing fancy, I saw beans

on toast a couple of times. At the very last minute, the dancers go up to the second floor dance studio. There are two routes. The dancers generally take the lift up to the second floor and then walk along the full length of the building, often pausing to look through the window down into the sports hall on the floor below, to watch the soft play session for toddlers, and then into the dance studio. The dance artists sometimes take the stairs. Bizarrely the stairs from the ground to the first floor are at the cafe end of the building and the stairs from the first floor to the second floor are at the opposite side, the dance studio side.

The dance studio is custom designed for dance. It has full length mirrors on one wall, disco lighting, built in sound system and air conditioning. It has a beautiful large skylight, that lets the natural light in. The skylight also seems to magnify the sun so on a sunny day, even in this temperate northern English town, it is like the magnifying glass the ant bully uses to burn the ants. It also leaks. The specialist dance floor has a semicircle of stains echoing the shape of the skylight. The floor is scuffed and marked from years of outdoor shoes and chair scrapes. A specialist dance floor needs care and attention that this floor sadly does not get. There is a sense that this class is forgotten by the sports centre. I assume it is the only one run by outside staff. Staff that only come once a week for the hour or hour and a half of the class and are not always popping in and out like the Zumba or spin teachers. Every week one of the session leaders has to run down to reception to get them to radio for someone to come and put out chairs for the dancers (the class is partly seated). There is also the clock. The small office wall clock above the doors at the back of the studio entertained us for weeks. In public buildings it always amuses me how long it takes for clocks to be reset after a switch from or to British Summer Time. Crantock Sports Centre did not disappoint. Three weeks after the clock change, the time was still an hour out. Then the clock was taken down. It took a month for it to reappear. We would joke that the person who was ladder trained did not have clock changing on their job spec so would have to pass it to someone else to change the hour. Then the clock would have to wait until

the ladder trained staff member was back on rota. We could have been way off the mark. But I suspect we were not.

Diamond Dance invited me to work with the group to support the existing dance leader who was feeling unconfident in her abilities since the numbers attending the session were low. The request coincided with me wanting another group for the purpose of this thesis. Diamond Dance agreed and I was contracted to co-deliver the sessions. By early summer 2014, we had successfully boosted the class numbers and had around 12 people regularly attending but then the class took a break for the summer during July and August and on resumption in September, the session was back to the same seven dancers regularly attending that were there before I started.

I only knew what one dancer did for a living before retirement and that was because she was not yet fully retired. I knew something of their interests: one dancer loved any creative activity; a keen dancer and we saw examples of her painting and poetry, another loved to travel but had to wait until her elderly and ailing cat died before visiting family in Australia, another enjoyed gardening and brought me a big bag of rhubarb from her allotment. For all of them, family was important. Some dancers could not stay for interviews after the session as they had to rush and collect grandchildren from school. Others proudly shared photos of new grandchildren and older grandchildren that they took abroad for holidays. One dancer lent heavily on the group for emotional support as her husband went through painful and lengthy hospital treatment. Another dancer kept her new granddaughter's medical condition to herself for a few weeks before she felt able to tell the group. Most of the dancers travelled by bus. Only two dancers drove to the sessions. One dancer with failing eyesight would take a taxi home if none of the other dancers were available to see her safely across the road, although they often would.

It is interesting to note the difference in the detail known about the world the dancers lived in outside of the session. Because, at Crantock, there was not the opportunity to develop the habit of sitting down for 'a brew and a chat' that we did at Sittingham, I missed out on a lot of informal chit chat that would have

filled this section. We often chatted before the session at Crantock but it was a shorter timeframe and I was often too preoccupied with the upcoming session to ask probing questions.

3.5.2 What happens in a session

This section will describe a typical community dance session as delivered by me. Often, when I tell someone I deliver 'community dance for older people' I am met with a blank stare; people are unable to picture what that might be. Otherwise they reply 'that sounds awful', assuming that I do armchair exercise to Vera Lynn songs. The dancers said they have found also it difficult to convey to others that it is possible to get a vigorous workout whilst sitting. Hence this need to explain what I actually do before we go any further by providing another 'thick description' of a session. The reader may find it useful to consult the glossary section at the beginning of the thesis whilst reading this section.

At Sittingham, as mentioned in the previous section, we sit, on chairs, in a circle for the full hour of the session. When the group was new, I would start by talking through health and safety, I would remind the dancers of healthy sitting positions, I would encourage them to listen to their own bodies, explain that the dancers they were the experts on their bodies and if I suggested a movement they were unhappy about or felt unable to do then they should not do it. If something hurts then they must stop immediately. It was ok to take rests and if someone in the group was having a rest we must not attempt to 'encourage' them to move. After several years of working together all the dancers have internalised this information and I no longer spell it out every week. I would describe my leadership style as humorous and enthusiastic (a contact at another centre described me as having 'lots of oomph'). Thus the delivery of the health and safety information was never a sombre, dry affair. We always start with a warm up, upper body first, to one track and then lower body to a following track. The warm up is generally done without me saying anything, other than the occasional short cue (e.g. 'other way' 'back to shoulders'). The dancers watch me and do similar movements in their own

bodies. The rest of the hour is filled with chat, music and dance. An example activity might be a dance that I have choreographed that the dancers follow as they see fit (please see https://youtu.be/RR6BEhOlHPI for a video of me leading a seated dance for the upper body). Another activity might be that I offer a structure for dancers to explore (see https://youtu.be/xLeQ2IoiWxw to watch me introducing an activity exploring the immediate space around ourselves). Props are often used: balloons get passed around, ribbons get waved or flicked, elastics get pulled, dancers working against the resistance, blankets or parachutes get wafted or rippled. Again, in the early days, these props would have been given out with lengthy explanations or suggestions on how to use them, now they are usually handed out with an understanding that the dancers use the prop however they see fit. The sessions always finish with a stretch out and a seated circle dance called 'Bells of Norwich'. Using this song to close means the last words of the session are always 'all will be well again I know'.

At Crantock, the sessions were structured slightly differently to Sittingham and that structure morphed as we went through the year of working together. The main difference was having two dance leaders who took a joint responsibility for the session but planned separately. When we first started, the sessions lasted an hour and a half: I planned and led the first half hour, which was seated and then the other dance leader led the majority of the next hour, which was all standing. I would offer additional activities, in the standing section, where appropriate. As the year went on, we starting interspersing the seated activities between the standing (instead of having them all together at the beginning) and then reduced the class time down to an hour. I also began to use props less and less with the group as I had a sense that they did not enjoy those activities as much. Crantock mainly had follow me dances whilst seated with some structures for improvisation offered and social or line dances when standing.

By the end of the research period, a Crantock class started at 1.30pm. The dance leaders would welcome the dancers individually, either downstairs before the session or upstairs in the dance studio if they arrived any point after 1.25. The session would probably start a few minutes late, as people arrived and settled into the space, and caught up with their friends. We would start with a warm up, this might be seated or standing. If enough dancers were present, we would then have a mixer dance, otherwise we would move straight on to the main section of the session: two or three standing dances, delivered by either dance leader, followed by a seated dance. The standing dances (that I devised) were mainly in the style of a line dance (but with 50s, 60s or 70s pop music) or social dances (partner, mixer or circle dances). Most of the time I would talk through the dance before we performed. I would offer alternatives (you can either do a grapevine or a two step) and explain where it might be useful to copy my use of left and right (if you do this kick with the left leg then it's easier to turn to face the next wall) but most of the time it was not important to copy the steps exactly. The seated dances would most likely be something I had used with the Sittingham group that week. The penultimate activity would be something set to a slower tempo to act as a cool down activity: this might be a social dance or an individual activity. The final activity was always a stretch which would use the chairs for support.

3.6 Consideration of quality and rigour in research

For Lincoln (1995) the overarching theme of her 'emerging criteria' for quality in qualitative research is relational: quality in research depends on the interpersonal between the researcher and the participants. She continues to suggest seven criteria for ensuring quality: positionality, community, voice, reflexivity, reciprocity, sacredness, and sharing privilege.

Positionality means considering the standpoint of the researcher and noting what the limits of the research must be. Throughout the text I have attempted to take ownership of my thinking and avoid making claims about experiences

that are not my own. There is no attempt to generalise from this research: this is an ethnography by a certain individual about a specific group of people at a particular time and location.

A further marker for quality in qualitative research is that the research should serve more than just the research or discourse community in which it resides. My aim is to serve the community of dancers who are participating in the research and any future dancers I work with. The research is into my practice as an artist, and, through the thoughtful reflection required by the research, I intend to improve my practice and provide better sessions for the dancers. The dancers are also making a valuable contribution to my work and, because of the respect for the relational nature of the research, they have a sense they are making a valued contribution to the research (which is one of the ways to well-being, 'give', as discussed in section 2.4)

In voice, Lincoln (1995) implores researchers to include polyvocality as 'resistance against silence' (Lincoln, 1995:282). Hillyer (1998) notices the lack of first person accounts of older women's experience of embodiment and Woodward notes that, other than 'disability studies and work on illness narratives' (Woodward, 2006:162), whenever the body is mentioned in text, then the imagination is usually guided towards an image of an young, fit body; the body of an older women is 'significant only in terms of its absence.' (Woodward, 2006:162). This thesis attempt to speak into that void.

For reciprocity, Lincoln suggests that researchers might open themselves to the same level of interrogation that the research participants might face. In Chapter 7, I reproduce details of my life and my experiences in much the same way that a research participant might open up in a post session conversation. Tamas (2008) writes how the orderliness of words does not speak the truth about the messiness of traumatic experiences, whilst the PhD experience has not been traumatic, I hope I have given a raw open account and I have certainly shared to a level where I feel a little uncomfortable.

Under reflexivity, Lincoln refers to having sufficient awareness that the process of researching can lead to learning and 'transformation' for the researcher. In studying the process of facilitation of the sessions, I am bringing an intense awareness to my own practice and can make changes. In writing about my experience as a researcher in Chapter 7, I am closely observing another practice and am able to use that to aid my development as a researcher.

In the present moment of environmental crisis, a 'sense of sacredness about that which nourishes and sustains us' (Lincoln, 1995:284) is vital for our very survival. Whilst this research does not deal with environmental issues, it does have a deep reverence for the relationships that sustain us (recall from section 1.3, this thesis was initially concerned with social networks) and values the feminist ways of knowing and being that positivist research is often inclined to ignore (Hesse-Biber, 2014).

Lincoln's final criteria is around sharing the privilege that may accrue from the research. Early in the research process, I did discuss my discomfort with blanket anonymity for the participants with the Sittingham dancers. Jokingly, one dancer noted that they wanted a public acknowledgement of their contribution. Ethical concerns meant I was unable to provide such a note in this thesis but my acknowledgement of the debt I owe to the dancers is demonstrated in my commitment to continuing the group even when it is not financially viable for myself.

Kincheloe (2001) offers that rigour in interdisciplinary research is established through thickness and complexity of the resultant writing. As introduced in 3.2, a thick description is not merely achieved by a critical mass of observed detail. A thick description must have sufficient description coupled with awareness of the relationships surrounding the observation and interpretation by the observer (Ponterotto, 2006). However, a researcher offering explanations and insights into other people's thoughts and actions may be considered a form of colonialism (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). In section 3.7, when considering the ethics of the research, I will briefly consider the research against further criteria for quality in qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). Tracy defines rigour as having

a richness of detail and sufficient complexity to convince a reader of plausibility: 'a researcher with a head full of theories, and a case full of abundant data, is best prepared to see nuance and complexity' (Tracy, 2010:841).

In section 7.2, I note that Leavy (2009) considers rigour to be a poor measure of quality in arts based work. She uses different criteria such as connection, disruption, resonance, coherence and novelty. In judging the aesthetics of the arts work, the main concern is does it serve its purpose within the research; does it add something new or different to the text of the thesis? Quality was built into the dance pieces by eliciting feedback from participants and colleagues throughout the research period making the pieces part of a dialogue rather than a fixed output. Leavy also recommends a blurring of the subject-object relationship by encouraging arts based researchers to keep reflective diaries of the creation process, excerpts of my diary entries are included in Chapter 7. Leavy, like Lincoln, suggests quality can be ensured by including multiple voices, but, differing from Lincoln, she suggests that including a literature review in the work succeeds in adding varying standpoints. Taking a theoretical standpoint during data analysis can offer new ways of seeing an art work and also add to the multivocality of the writing. Leavy promotes cyclical analysis, revisiting earlier data analyses and re-examining previous conclusions, and triangulation, which may have its roots in positivist quantitative science but it can be useful in qualitative research to allow a number of standpoints, not to ascertain a singular truth, but to allow for a multi voiced account that adds layers of richness to a research account (Seale, 1999). Leavy's final marker for quality is ethics and full disclosure, which is discussed in the next section.

3.7 Ethics

In this section of the methodology chapter, I turn to the ethical issues of the research. My research proposal was approved through one process within MMU but ethical approval for the research had to be acquired through a separate

process at the university. As I was hoping to work in a person centred way, I offered a protocol using literature by Zeni (1998), Guillemin and Gillam (2004), and Brydon-Miller (2013) where I would use ethical touchstones to guide my conduct and decision making during the research process. This meant that my actions in the field would be guided by the people I was working with. The university's position was that to ensure the safety of the participants, I had to consider possible outcomes of the research before entering the field. I successfully submitted to the departmental ethics committee three times during the research period. Once for the initial intervention, one amendment to the intervention and a new submission for the ethnographic approach.

The Economic and Social Research Council (ERSC) is 'the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues' (ESRC, 2015a) and has principle based guidance to ensure the research it funds is conducted ethically. They state,

> 1. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency. (ERSC, 2015b)

Integrity closely relates to the congruence of person centred approach introduced in chapter 2. I aimed to be honest and clear with the participants and myself at all times. I provided printed information on the research, I discussed the progress of the research with the participants candidly and often. And when we spoke, I held an intention of equal power between us and valued the time and effort given freely by the participants to contribute to the research.

Tracy (2010) offers eight criteria for quality in qualitative research: 'worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonances, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence' (Tracy, 2010: 837).

The topic being worth studying was established in the previous chapter: arts and health is a burgeoning field that can offer holistic well-being in a time of increasing social inequality but this provision, and arts and health practitioners' livelihoods, depend on making sure funding bodies have access to wide research base. Rich rigour is ensured through using the four modalities of approaching the research questions. Sincerity is attended to through the use of reflection to support the analysis in *Watching* and the use of autoethnography to examine the research process in *Reflecting*. Credibility is the notion that the results seem plausible, here provided by the use of thick description, dependence on the embodied experience of being in a setting and, again, the use of four different research modalities to uncover the findings. By resonance, Tracy (2010) refers to the ability of the research to connect with an audience. My intention is that the performative writing and the dance work will offer a reader an emotional way into the research. As a PhD study, there is an expectation that this research offers a contribution to knowledge, what Tracy (2010) terms a 'significant contribution', this will be further discussed in Chapters 8 and 9. Tracy (2010) describes ethics comprising of procedural ethics (the sort of ethics approved by the university ethics committee – making sure data is held securely and keeping participants are protected from repercussions of the research at an individual level), situational ethics (the acknowledgement that each research site and opportunity is unique and may require a response guided, not by procedural guidelines but by a protocol that reminds the researcher of the guiding principles in the research and give them the opportunity to choose a most appropriate action in the moment), relational ethics (where the researcher's duty of care must override the desire to get 'juicy' data) and exiting ethics (which is discussed in the next section). Tracy's (2010) final quality criteria is that of 'meaningful coherence', that a research project chooses appropriate methodologies and methods for the research question and that the research satisfies the questions it sought at the outset. The success of this research will be considered in Chapter 9. Using Tracy's markers as a guide, this research contains the necessary processes to ensure quality research.

The final requirement of the first principle in the ESRC's framework is transparency which is defined elsewhere as 'The full, accurate, and open disclosure of relevant information is always important.' (ESRC, 2015b). This is similar to Tracy's (2010) conception of sincerity. Transparency is ensured through the honest and reflexive nature of the thesis (still embodying the Rogerian congruence introduced in the previous chapter) and through the strong relationships I built with the dancers. Similar to my parenting beliefs, the relationship is the primary thing, all else (the arts practice and the research) is in service to the relationship not the other way around. The relationship was built on honesty, trust and professionalism (which will be discussed in *Listening*).

> 2. Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved. Some variation is allowed in very specific research contexts for which detailed guidance is provided in Section 2. (ERSC, 2015b)

I produced participant sheets (a copy provided in the Appendix A) and participants signed to confirm that they had read and were happy with the content. In most cases, dancers were willing to support me and trusted me and were happy to sign anything I asked them to. I had to insist quite strongly that dancers actually read the information I provided. The dancers were interested in my research throughout the research period and frequently asked about the progress. I happily provided them with updates on developments and frequently asked their opinion on the best direction.

To some of my PhD research colleagues, fully informed meant providing a participant information sheet and a signed consent form before starting the research. If a person no longer wanted to take part in the research, they had all the information they needed and could say so. I was very uncomfortable with such an approach. I did hand out participant information sheets, but I also gained a notional group assent to record the conversations every time we

met. Frequently, this was instigated by a participant: "have you got anything you need to ask us today?" Other times, I would gain a quick verbal assent for recording (holding up the dictaphone saying something like "you ok to do this?" to the group. Not easy for someone to negate but I think people would have been comfortable to say "not today thank you" plus it was not really the place members of the group would say "I really need to talk about this personal problem I've been having"). I would remind the dancers that they did not have to say anything, that they could choose their level of engagement, that it was preferable for them to think of something to say but wait a week to say it because it could not be unsaid (one of my first questions was often 'does anyone have anything they want to say from last week') and to keep the information shared within the group. At Sittingham, these warnings were frequently greeted with amusement as the dancers appeared to believe we had the type of relationship that I would not take advantage of or that the information being shared was not of a sensitive nature. One session, the talk turned to a partner's serious illness so I made the instant decision to turn off the Dictaphone, that ethical approach was not covered by the requirement of the university but was a type of ethical relating described by Guillemin and Heggen (2009). I did include in the participant information the suggestion that I might negotiate with the dancers the public release of selected video clips of the sessions. At the beginning of the writing up period, I did discuss with the Sittingham group the possibility of showing clips to the thesis examiners but I decided against the idea as the participants were not keen on their videos being placed on the internet and the logistics of using a DVD in this mobile digital age could not be relied on. Conversely, Etherington (2007) notes that she felt as she stressed, strongly, the participant's right to withdraw, she began to erase the notion of the participant as an individual with the agency to choose their involvement with the research.

> 3. The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected. (ERSC, 2015b)

The research locations and the participants have all been given pseudonyms. I have also attempted to obscure information where a unique combination of life situations might make an individual identifiable to a person familiar with the research sites. However, the participants at Sittingham did not want anonymity. They were trusted collaborators, without whom I had no thesis. They were proud of their contribution to my research and we all wanted the recognition to be shared. Sinha and Back (2014) also bridled at the 'unthinking conservatism' (2014: 485) of automatic anonymization and suspect it makes real collaboration with research participant difficult. I struggled for quite some time with the blanket requirement for all participants to remain anonymous but as the research progressed, the dancers revealed more information about themselves and I became more comfortable with the condition of anonymity. All the Sittingham participants have seen various drafts of the thesis complete with their new identities and they seem comfortable with their representation.

> 4. Research participants must take part voluntarily, free from any coercion. (ERSC, 2015b)

All the dancers were offered the chance to take part in the sessions without taking part in the research, but no one accepted that offer. At Sittingham, I had been working with the group for about eighteen months when I asked if they take part in the research. By then, we had established a strong relationship, I have a sense that not taking part in the research might be viewed as them letting me down. Also, there was a possibility that if I could not use the Sittingham group as part of my research then I might have to cancel the session to go and work with another group. This was never said by either myself or by the dancers but I think the thought crossed all our minds. Whilst the aim of community arts practice is to equalise the power distribution between members of the group (Phelan, 2008) it must be considered here that I do wield power in the session by virtue of being the dance leader: I am the one with responsibility of deciding what happens in the session and the expectation that I will keep the dancers safe.

Related to this point of voluntary participation is the question of payment. Normally, the ethical dilemma is around paying participants to take part in the research. There are researchers that believe that participants are valued and equal members of the team and should be compensated for their involvement just as an academic researcher would expect to. From the guidelines, the ESRC (2015b) is clearly worried that payment implies coercion to take part in the research and that participants must be able to withdraw from the research at any time. However, in my research, I was asking the dancers to pay to take part in sessions that were part of my research. I took the decision that it was unethical to fellow community artists who might want to work with these communities in the future for me to offer the dance sessions free of charge and then create an expectation that community arts were cost free. Dancers at Sittingham paid £3 per session, directly to me. The dancers at Crantock paid the centre £2.70 or the sessions were free if they were leisure centre members. Diamond Dance paid me £22 for the session and the other dance leader £30. I suggested we divide the fee up unequally since I was also notionally being paid by the university (I received a studentship)

> 5. Harm to research participants and researchers must be
> avoided in all instances. (ERSC, 2015b)

As an experienced community dance artist, I take the protection of participants from physical harm very seriously. My main strategy was to empower dancers to look after their own well-being within a session. I collected health data from all participants when they first joined the group, not so I would know how best to work with an individual but so I could start a conversation, if required, on what I needed to do to keep them safe (generally when someone would write they had a particular condition, I would ask them, individually, if a healthcare professional had ever advised them about movements they should or should not be doing).

I felt this enacted respect for the participant by trusting the judgement and knowledge of the dancer. However, one university reviewer was concerned that I might be overreaching my professional knowledge by suggesting that I

possess sufficient medical knowledge to reach a joint conclusion about their suitability for activity. The reviewer felt it would be safer to get each participant to obtain the consent of their GP before starting the class. I was unhappy with this suggestion as I believed it might impact on the accessibility of the session (I hear from participants how difficult it is to get an appointment with a doctor and a GP is entitled to (although I am aware many do not) charge a patient for a letter clearing them to take part in an activity). I compromised by amending the wording on the form to emphasise I was not a healthcare professional.

Additionally, the university ethics procedure required me to consider the safe handling of the physical datasheets. I kept the data sheets in an opaque file, only took out one sheet at once and stored them in a locked filing cabinet at my home between sessions.

I designed activities that attempted to minimise risk of injury to the participants in the way I would in my practice without the added layer of research observation. I ensured that there was a balance of upper and lower body parts used over the course of a session so that one body part did not get overtired. I also always included a warm up and a stretch at the end. At Crantock we often did a slower paced activity just before the stretch to act as a cool down activity.

Before starting a session, I would do a visual risk assessment of the space, addressing anything I thought might be a hazard for participants (generally trip hazards but also making sure we had access to water on particularly hot days).

To gain university ethics approval for the research, I had to write that I would follow the departmental distress protocol. Fortunately, I never had cause to employ the distress protocol. Unfortunately there was no way I would have ever been able to follow it had distress occurred during the research. The protocol required two researchers to be present during interviews and for one of them to be a qualified healthcare professional. I was working alone delivering the session at Sittingham (which is accepted, normal, if not ideal, practise in community arts delivery) and the other dance leader did not stay for

the post session conversations at Crantock. Also, I am not a qualified healthcare professional, this requirement again marks me as an outsider in the department. My outsider status is considered more in *Reflecting*.

> 6. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit. (ERSC, 2015b)

The conflict of the differing roles I inhabited throughout the research is discussed in *Reflecting*. Throughout the research, I have been explicit to all interested parties about my connection to the university and to Diamond Dance and, above all, my loyalty to the dancers I work with. This loyalty, however, is going to make the ending of the research very difficult.

3.8 The authentic researcher

Authentic movement is the practice of embodied movement rather than movement that is the result of intellectual planning (Adler, 2002). It is a sensuous response with the intention of bypassing conscious thought and censorship. It offers "new ways of knowing the self and the other" (Adler, 2002:XVIII). As noted in section 2.8.1, I consider the practice of authentic movement to be conceptually similar to congruence in Rogers' person centred practice. In section 2.9, I used the word 'authentic' in opposition to the word 'professional' where I felt the description of professional meant being dishonest about one's own experience. Freedburg (2007) makes a similar distinction between professional and authentic feminist social work practice: authentic here means that the professional in the helping relationship allows for themselves to be included in the work. Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) use the word 'authentic' to describe research which is valid. Tracy (2010) uses the term sincerity to mean authentic, sincerity can be achieved through a research using 'self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing.' (Tracy, 2010:841). Leavy (2009), in describing her alternative to rigour, uses authentic to mean trustworthiness. For the purpose of this research, I consider

an authentic researcher to be one who works throughout the research period with an attitude of attunement to one's own feelings and an openness about those feelings. My openness around my feelings is demonstrated through the inclusion of Chapter 7. Section 5.4.2 also demonstrates attunement to the needs of the dancers in the group.

3.9 Exiting the field / Exiting the sector

At the time of ethics submission, I proposed that the groups would continue indefinitely, in cooperative decision with the dancers still attending at that time. My relational ethics was guided by knowing I wanted to continue a working relationship with the dancers: there was no way I could 'stitch up' the participants by writing sensational stories to gain my PhD and then return to working with the dance group. However, since, the group local to the university never got off the ground and the Crantock group has been cancelled by the leisure centre (after I had carefully negotiated my exit and reassured the dancers that I would return for holiday cover). Hence an official exit strategy was never developed. The Sittingham group continues to run at the time of writing but my precarious employment situation is threatening the survival of the group, and participants are aware that I am job hunting. For the session to pay at the rate at which I am normally employed, the income generated would have to more than double. This is not an extravagant claim to income: working ten classes a week at this rate would give me an income comparable to my current student stipend. The ethics of running the kind of provision must also extend to the ethics of expecting artists to run this sort of provision without earning a living. It is widespread concern. In fact, arts in the UK currently runs on the expectation that people working in the culture sector will put in many unpaid hours (Atkinson-Lord, 2015). How ethical is it to run provision like this in order to gain a doctorate to improve my chances of employment in another sector? Huisman (2008) writes on the difficulties of wanting to do ethical feminist research but also needing to meet the requirements of the academy to achieve her degree. Dickson-Swift et al. (2008) writes about the importance of

preparing for the end of the research. There will certainly be celebration of completion with the Sittingham group and I expect to share copies of my thesis (in soft cover) with the dancers. There is also acknowledgement that the research has changed the group, the individuals in the group and their relationships with each other and with people outside the group (my favourite example being Ruth feeling proud of 'getting one over' her doctor when she told him 'actually, yes, I do do regular exercise').

This chapter has considered how the research was undertaken and described the methods employed in this ethnography / practice led research hybrid. The following four chapters detail the findings of the research beginning with the voices of the participants.

Chapter 4 - Listening

The first of four findings chapters, this chapter is an account of how the dancers talk about the sessions. This chapter seeks to uncover what the dancers believe happens in the dance session and what do they understand to be the benefits for them. This will aid in answering the first research aim: increase understanding of the experience of older people participating in community arts and health provision. It is quite difficult to language a transient body based experience (although Anttila (2007) and Ylönen (2003) suggests that dancers might be better at this because of their high levels of bodily literacy. In fact, Gardener (2011) quotes Martha Graham discussing how dancers' brains and conversations appear to be non-linear because of their bodily intelligence) so much of the talk detailed here is about outcomes of the session rather than the experience of the session. The dancers were free to direct the conversations where ever they felt so that is what is analysed here. This chapter will first introduce the analysis procedure and will then discuss the findings under the headings 'Physical', 'Psychological' and 'Social'.

4.1 Analysis

Across the research period, I recorded 25 conversations at Sittingham and two with Crantock. In total, 11 transcripts were transcribed (some conversations were not transcribed as I decided they strayed too far from the subject of the sessions to be considered useful).

After the session at Sittingham, we would each have our coffee or tea. By the end of the research period, the more mobile of the members (including myself) each knew how everyone preferred their brew. Biscuits always managed to appear, usually through a dancer buying them in specially for the group. Sometimes, after Christmas and Easter, some biscuits that were bought by family as a gift for the dancer, were shared at session. Before the talking could begin, everyone had to be supplied with a drink and at least the offer of a

biscuit. Even though I tried to diet frequently through the research period, refusing a biscuit was never really an option.

Each post session conversation at Sittingham was recorded digitally. I then transcribed the conversations and further familiarised myself with the data. I transcribed the words the dancers used verbatim, I approximated non word noises (for example, [laughs], [sigh], uh huh, hmmmm) but did not transcribe silences beyond inserting '[pause]' (i.e. I did not time the pauses). Following Braun and Clarke (2006), the transcripts were coded using NVivo. Each transcript was read line by line and then either a code was created, if the topic was a new one, or assigned to a code already created. If the line of text was mainly about other people's experiences of topics not related to ageing or community arts, then it was not coded. Eventually forty nine codes were identified in eleven transcripts.

Fifteen codes were defined as being outside of the experience of the session. These included 'technology as puzzling', 'unique experience of ageing' and 'family' and are not explicitly considered in this chapter. The higher level codes relating to the session were 'Experience of session', 'Response to music', 'Physical space or building for group' and 'Social as care'. Under the 'Experience of session' code, there were twenty three further codes including 'Staying active, keeping busy', 'Enjoyment or joy' and 'Singing'.

With the qualitative nature of the research, I wanted the themes and patterns in the data to become transparent during the research and analysis (Janesick, 2000, Braun & Clarke, 2006). After establishing a high level code of 'experience of session', the codes underneath it and codes outside of it were created on reading.   However, the framing of the research under the exploration of 'the experience' coupled with my standpoint of working in arts and health meant that themes around health and well-being were easily (but usefully) discernible.

The 'experience of session' codes were then grouped under three themes that closely reflect the WHO's definition of health (2003):

- Physical aspects - how did they use their body in the session, how did they experience their body in the session, what physical outcomes did they experience over the period of the research and the experience of the physical space of the session
- Psychological - Immersion in the session - being fully involved in the sessions, losing track of time, reminiscence, learning - gaining new knowledge about self and the art form
- Social - the experience of trust, support, interest in others and humour.

4.2 Physical aspects

By 'Physical aspects' I refer to what is bodily experienced within the sessions: so the movements performed through the body and that which is sensed through the body. I have grouped these under the headings 'How did they use their bodies?', 'What did they feel?', 'What were the physical outcomes?' and 'Physical Space'.

4.2.1 How did they use their bodies?

In the post session conversations, the dancers did not normally reference the movements they had just made. Possibly, the dancers did not think to name them because we had all been there and experienced it together, but maybe the dancers did not discuss the moving because it is difficult to language bodily experiences. The frequently cited example of this type of knowledge is knowing how to ride a bicycle but being unable to describe how (see Grant, 2007 or Nelson, 2013). In psychology this is called 'procedural knowledge' (Cauley, 1986). In the following quote, Freda is naming a growing somatic

awareness. Through the sessions, she is becoming more aware of parts of her body she has not paid attention to for a while:

> I mean normally we straighten up frequently … but this
> bending in different places is really [making me] think (Freda)

Joanna originally joined the group because 'the doctor from the hospital' had advised her to 'do more exercise to keep [her] muscles'. Eve and Judith called the session 'exercise to music'. When I pressed the dancers at Sittingham, 'is what we are doing just exercise?' Ruth described it as 'fluid exercise' and Kath 'creative exercise'. All of them used the word 'exercise', no one used the word 'dance'.

I presume the dancers did not recognise themselves as 'dancers' as they frequently used language, as in the following quotes, that appears to distance them from the identity of 'dancer'.

> I would love to be able to... gracefully.... I do ... and I can't
> get it... (Sarah)

> Coming up, that I was aware of people [doing ballet] coz
> people went to ballet but I didn't, I was totally the wrong shape
> and size and everything else but- and it wasn't my thing (Beth)

> I mean we might not be very good at it but we keen to
> participate and to do it (Freda)

Caspersen et al. (1985:128) defined exercise as energy consuming movement, produced by muscular effort that is 'planned, structured, repetitive, and purposive in the sense that improvement or maintenance of one or more components of physical fitness is an objective.' The authors break down physical fitness into two areas: health related fitness (cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, body composition, flexibility) and skill related fitness (agility, balance, coordination, speed, power, reaction time) (Caspersen et al., 1985:128). As will be further discussed in the next chapter (section 5.3), physical outcomes are not a primary concern of the construction of the sessions however they are listed on the planning

documentation as a secondary consideration so maybe the dancers are accurate in calling the sessions exercise. Hanna (1987) asserts there are four conditions that must be satisfied for an observed behaviour to be called 'dance' (See Chapter 2, section 2.7). The underlying requirement is that the dancer must hold the intention of dancing. The dancers in this research believe themselves to be exercising, I am the only member of the group to consider this movement 'dance'.

The notion that 'everything is dance' (Freda) is new to them, and has expanded their definition of dance, although, judging by the language used in the conversations, not yet enough to include themselves as dancers. The use of pedestrian movement as dance has been used in professional dance since the 1960s. Judson Dance Theater, in the US, rejected the virtuosity required for both classical and modern dance and embraced a movement style that was accessible to everyone (Platt, 2014).

The dancers also 'worked hard' (Sarah) and 'want[ed] it to count' (Kath). For the dancers at Sittingham, the sessions represented their only physical activity beyond the demands of everyday life (for example housework or shopping). They want to work hard in the sessions because they want to know that 'it makes a difference' (Kath). They have bought into the discourse that physical activity is important but they are possibly also making the assumption that they need a specific environment to do it in. Or they are aware they need the company of other people to work out: as Freda says 'I always mean to do a bit at home' but she has not yet got around to doing any. Or they have evidence, on the basis of their own experience, that the sessions are beneficial to them. Quotes demonstrating this understanding are in 'What were the physical outcomes' section 4.2.3.

For the first time in 2011, the Chief Medical Officers (for the UK) released guidelines for the amount of physical activity to maintain health specifically for

people over the age of 65. The Governmental advice is to build up to two and a half hours of moderate physical activity spread over the course of a week (Davies et al. 2011). The report assumes that many older adults are not currently doing this and encourages people to build up to the target starting with ten minutes of continuous exertion.

> I thought the … range of exercises was good today. I like the fact that we did … different things so we different parts of your body were exercised. We did legs, arms, back … (Kath)

As Kath noticed, the sessions I delivered used different body parts individually rather than the whole body. Designing the sessions in this way means avoiding being too tiring for the more frail dancers. This means that all the dancers can be involved for the full hour, making a large contribution to that two and a half hours requirement.

Another physical movement that was referred to during the conversations was 'stretching'. The dancers were asked how they would describe the group to an outsider and Kath said the group stretched the dancers two ways,

> We listen to different music, we do different activities. There are activities to stretch … your body and to stretch your reasoning and your cognitive abilities … and your coordination … (Kath)

A few minutes later, Beth also talked about stretching but I am not so clear if she is referring to physical or psychological stretching,

> But you do encourage us to try and you know stretch a little bit not just be happy with what we can do just to try and get it (Beth)

This section has considered how they used their body and has considered the difference between dancing and exercise, the participants not identifying as dancers and difficulty in conceptualising dance.

4.2.2 What did they feel

Whilst the previous section described what bodies did in the session, this section looks at the range of sensations experienced in the session.

Ruth felt looser after the sessions, as opposed to other physical activity she has attended.

> My experience of exercise is that ... in the past, which I tended avoid, is that you feel jolly sore after it (Ruth)

In earlier sessions, before the research period commenced in 2013, I gave dancers at the start of each session reminders on how to take care of themselves. By the time of the research, the dancers felt able to take responsibility for their own well-being, monitoring themselves and choosing where to fit in, what to adapt and when to take a break. The following quotes demonstrate how that might work for an individual dancer.

> I like being able to sit down when I want. If I felt I wasn't able to miss some dances then I wouldn't come at all. (Lois)

> There are some exercises where you doing them I'm very limited you don't feel that you've got to try and push yourself you know you can take a step back (Beth)

> Ruth feels comfortable because she feels that she can do the bit that she can do and stop when … she wants to. And I think if she didn't feel like that she wouldn't feel comfortable coming (Kath)

> Because if you can't do it, … you just drop out of that little bit. (Sarah) Or do what you can (Beth) Or do what you can (Sarah)

One dancer talked about finding a balance between pushing yourself to the edge of your ability to improve and pushing too far and hurting yourself.

> Find that line between where it's too far and that really hurts you and that's not good (Kath)

This balance is particularly important precisely because the dancers are expected/empowered to engage with the work in a session at level that is appropriate for them at the particular time and no one else in the session has the access to the bodily felt information of the individual. The sessions (the artist/leader models how this is to be done in the group but this is work that must be performed by all members of the group) should be accepting that people have varying abilities over the weeks (and within a session). This is another way the dancers show care for each other: by respecting the choices the other dancers make for themselves. I design the sessions for each group, cognisant of the members' abilities and preferences and are sometimes amended 'on the fly' if the session runs differently to the way the artist/leader had predicted/assumed. (The next chapter, section 5.3, discusses the process of planning more fully.)

One dancer felt limited by her impairment (a frozen shoulder that meant she was unable to lift her arm above chest height)

> I know there's things when I can't move this arm. I think if I had, if I was being honest I would say it does bother me a bit because I can see the when you doing you know these kind of movements [moves her left hand from side to side] and you're sort of mirroring it and that kind of thing and my arm doesn't so I think to myself should I put it this one higher and this one comes [raises right arm to demo limited movement] it looks funny. (Beth)

Whereas another dancer seemed less concerned about her impairment

> I can't bend my knees so I don't. But you've got to do something (Milly)

Both dancers knew that it was acceptable, indeed it was expected, and it was necessary to adapt the instruction offered by the dance leader for their own bodies. Whether through leaving part of the movement out, like Milly, or trying

out an alternative movement, like Beth, both dancers took the responsibility for making the movement safe for them.

As already mentioned the dancers felt they worked hard, to the point of Ruth feeling 'pleasantly tired'. Even so, they were all taking responsibility for themselves and not getting to a point of exhaustion. But tired was not the only thing they felt at the end of a session.

In this section, I have considered how the dancers felt during the session and heard the dancers discussing their autonomy, balance and impairments.

4.2.3 What were the outcomes

This section examines how the dancers described feeling after the session and in the space between sessions. All the dancers appear to see the sessions as support for their physical health which offers them improved quality of life outside of the session. There are many definitions of 'Quality of Life' in the literature (Camfield and Skevington, 2008) but it generally considers the life of an individual, rather than just their body (Addington-Hall and Kalra, 2001), and involves a subjective assessment of a person's physical, social and psychological well-being (Camfield and Skevington, 2008). The dancers alluded to the sessions supporting their quality of life when they mentioned that they came to retain muscle strength whilst living with a muscle wasting condition, how their breathing capacity had improved whilst recovering from a heart condition, and how they felt their knee function had improved sufficiently so to avoid further surgery.

> We're actually thinking about going out walks again (Sarah)

The quote above was from a dancer who felt able to resume taking walks for pleasure with her husband as she felt the sessions (plus the extra movement she now did at home because it came naturally after being practised in the sessions) had mobilised her knee to the extent walking would no longer cause her pain. The sessions had supported her enjoyment of family life and exploring the local community.

At the other end of the spectrum, some dancers ached at the end of a session but felt it was beneficial over the long term

> [Maxine said: Oh no. Look at you. Limping out] I limped in too. It's fine. I'm old, I'm falling apart. I need to be moving. I'm supposed to be moving. If I didn't come here, then I would be sat at home and that would hurt more. ... I can get down the stairs now better than I could when I first came. (Mo)

> [At end of session] I ache all over. We thought, oh it'll be alright, a bit of gentle exercise. But you have no idea how much pain I'm in now. It'll take about an hour for it to wear off now. See I've got a bad hip. I had a hip replacement but it didn't work and oh it hurts so much. So I walk with all my weight on this leg and now that's going dodgy. (Jan)

The dancers discussed how they are living with pain, they are adapted to it and they use the sessions to help them deal with the pain, ease the pain or prevent other pains developing. They know their limitations but all of them are keen to work to either stop any further deterioration or to even improve their conditions. Gignac et al. (2000) found that older people living with chronic conditions used differing adaptations, depending on the venue or setting, to maintain independence.

> I mean you move your spine as you walk as you do all sorts of things but it's not a conscious movement whereas a lot of movements that you do [here] are more of conscious movement. (Kath)

The Sittingham dancers, such as Kath above, noticed increased somatic awareness after some of the quieter activities. Somatic awareness is useful because the somatic principles of slowing down and taking notice (Enghauser, 2007) activates the parasympathetic nervous system which reduces stress levels and encourages rest and repair (Juhan, 2003). Modern life may encourage us to ignore warning signs the body is giving us in order to carry on being active and productive. Taking the time to notice may bring awareness to areas of the body that have been neglected and allowing opportunity to

reactivate tissues that have been still for a long time (Hanna, 1988). However, this same modern life attitude allows people to develop a tolerance of pain. I have no direct experience of chronic pain but I suspect that using techniques that focus attention on sensation may not be helpful. However, I have used somatic awareness to lessen the discomfort of an acute pain (see 'Shoulder pain' in *Dancing* section 6.4.4) so the idea may need further exploration. The Crantock dancers did not do many of these somatic awareness enhancing type of activities as I felt uncomfortable facilitating them in the larger, louder space and the more vocal members of the group suggested they preferred more vigorous movement.

The Crantock dancers described how they attended the sessions because they had no desire to sit around the house now that they were retired. As already mentioned, the Sittingham dancers made reference to working hard in the sessions. Whilst I am sure none of the dancers thought of the session as a work activity it did function to keep them occupied in their everyday lives. Smith (2006:10) defines work as 'anything … people do that is intended, involves time and effort, and is done in a particular time and place …' Several dancers made reference to Tuesday being their regular day for exercise class and they would arrange appointments around the dance sessions. Stebbins (2000) research suggests that retired professional women (in the US) are interested in post-retirement roles that are interesting, enjoyable and can increase their service to the church, he also cites research that retired professionals are keen to learn in retirement, especially if they can use that knowledge in social contact with others. The dance session can fulfil all of these criteria.

As introduced in Chapter 2, Rowe and Kahn developed a new model of ageing in 1987 and refined it in 1997. It shifted the mainstream narrative of ageing from one of inevitable decline to one where it was possible for people to be physically and mentally healthy and socially engaged in old age. The theory is

not without its critics, a recent article by Katz and Calisanti (2015) highlights some of the issues from a critical gerontology stance. Firstly, they consider the concept poorly defined and, in the intervening years since Rowe and Kahn first popularised the idea, successful ageing has come to mean a wide range of things. Another large problem with the theory, according to Katz and Calisanti (2015), is that it places responsibility for ageing well at the level of the individual and fails to consider social and cultural factors, such as socioeconomic status, gender and ethnicity, which may impact on a person's ability to remain healthy and engaged. Katz and Calisanti (2015) also note that certain people are, by definition, unable to successfully age because of existing disability or dependency. They question the impact a definition of successful ageing might have on the health and social care these people might be able to expect in later life.

Stow and Cooney (2015) also critique successful ageing but from a life-course perspective. They also note the lack of the consideration of the impact of social factors through the life course. They additionally note that later life may be too late to make the individual choices that could facilitate a successful old age (they offer the example of smoking through adulthood). A final critique that a life course perspective might offer is the impact of experience at early critical development points may shape what version of ageing is available for an individual (for example, the impact of poverty or poor nutrition during childhood).

But what of the experience of successful ageing for these dancers? They are certainly active and socially engaged, however most have some physical impairment that limits, to a greater or lesser extent, their physical capability. Whilst I do not believe any of the dancers have 'given up on life' in their older age, I do have a sense that encouragement (by health professionals, family and wider society) to become more active in older age can be construed as nagging: a couple of the dancers said they had been given sheets of exercises

by physiotherapists and would only complete the bare minimum and most unwillingly. Why must a 'good' retirement be about activity and not rest? (Minkler and Holstein, 2008)

4.2.4 Physical Space

Finally for the theme of *Physical*, the dancers' conversations also touched on the physical space around them. The dancers at Sittingham discussed how they liked the space the session took place in. For many of them, it was the church that they worshipped at and were actively involved in. It was described as 'intimate' (Beth), 'home' (Ruth), 'comfortable' (Mary) and 'family' (Freda) and was in stark contrast to the negative image of a school gym hall. Conradson (2003) describes how some relational environments become spaces of care: this group, coming together in this space, gave and received care to and from the other members of the group.

4.3 Psychological

This section deals with how the dancers talked about the intellectual and emotional aspects of the session as opposed to the body based aspects of the previous section. (As a somatic practitioner, I have issues with the separation of body and brain or mind but I accept that it is unquestioned in most parts of our society.) This section will consider at 'Experience of time', 'Memory and Music' and 'Learning'.

4.3.1 Experience of time

Both groups commented that time passed quickly when they were enjoying the session.

> Time went quick (Judith)
>
> When you say to someone 'well we go in and we do an hour' …
> they say 'an hour?' … but you don't notice that time (Beth)

> You know you might look up suddenly and think "oh my
> goodness" … you've only got five minutes left and we've done
> all sorts you know (Beth)

Eve and Judith referred to the session having a 'flow'. This could be linked to Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow. Csikszentmihalyi (2002) described a flow state as being at an adequate skill level for a task and then entering so fully into achieving the task that consciousness of other things, such as time, disappears. This definition also fits Beth's description of the sessions above.

In four different interviews, the 'variety' in the session was mentioned as a positive aspect.

> How would you describe these sessions to someone that
> doesn't come? (Maxine) … Varied and interesting (Kath)
>
> I thought the … range of exercises was good today. (Sarah)
>
> I liked the variety today, … I mean we usually have variety but
> I liked the new ones that we did. … It was good. (Kath)
>
> I like the variety (Freda)

I have never taken the time before to examine how variety happens in a session. Partly it is a safety feature instilled by my original training: to save overtiring the body, the seated dance workshop is split between different body parts (a foot dance is followed by an activity that uses a handheld prop) and different dynamics (a vigorous activity is followed by something a little more gentle). Also, my desire to plan sessions that incorporates the different musical tastes of the dancers will contribute to a sense of variety (in stark contrast to the aerobics classes I attend where the same style of music is used throughout to drive the workout). The planning of the sessions is discussed more fully in *Watching*.

4.3.2 Memory and Music

In *Watching*, we will see the dancers using the session for reminiscence. However, when they talked about the sessions, the topic of reminiscence was closely linked to the use of music in the sessions.

> I think your choice of music is very [pause] suitable. We like it. (Freda)

I consider the music important and spend a lot of time trying to get it right, for the activity and for the dancers.

Music can trigger memories and creates atmosphere. DeNora (1999) writes how we can use music as a technology to help us with emotional work. Sometimes we might put some music on to change our mood, to cheer ourselves up for example. At other times, DeNora found that people 'soundtracked' their mood; putting on sad music for sad times, or aggressive music for when we feel angry. The music gives permission for feeling a particular emotion. Palmer (2014) says that art is mostly about allowing the artist and the audience the chance to feel heard, or seen, and understood.

The music also acted as motivation for, or distraction from, the 'work' of the session. Several dancers noted that the music could encourage them to continue to move or to move in a more challenging way than silence might.

> I think the music, I mean I'm not musical at all, I'm very nearly tone deaf I think but it … makes it more interesting, I mean, I've never been one to exercise willingly which is probably why I'm- … it's the only exercise really that I get (Ruth)

Beth added that listening to the music 'distracted' her from the activity so she achieved more.

Moving from the auditory sense to the visual, during a session, whilst working with the scarves, one dancer noted:

> It's nice to work with something beautiful (Ruth)

Ruth was also attending a falls prevention exercise class elsewhere where the only prop they used was a piece of rubber (which in a post session conversation she remarked you might find beautiful if you were 'a bit kinky'). Aesthetic deprivation, whilst less of an issue for the people taking part in this research, as they live independently in the community as opposed to in an institution, is worth considering here. The small acts of beauty, colour and attention to sensation make the arts based nature of the work valuable. Moss and O'Neil (2014) believe that attending to the aesthetics of everyday can have a bigger impact on a person's life than the high arts.

> Some people are terrified of making a mistake but I don't care
> if I make a fool of myself (Joanna)

I do not know that Joanna ever made a fool of herself. She did dance in a full bodied, enthusiastic way and made the sessions fun to be in (at least for me). When I asked her how she was after one particular session, she gave a long list of health complaints that had been plaguing her in the previous few weeks. None of this had shown in her movements, I suspected that her full commitment to getting into the music and the movements granted her a moment's respite from her worrying: enjoying the music enabled her to lose her inhibitions and forget her problems. Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg (2002b) call dance performativity an opportunity to escape the mundane: through the use of colour, beauty and fun, these sessions are indeed a chance to escape the mundane everyday experience of ageing.

4.3.3 Learning

Another psychological aspect of the session the dancers at Sittingham valued was learning and being intellectually challenged.

> You have four teachers here, it's in our subconscious (Ruth)

Despite identifying as non-dancers, the dancers at Sittingham were very keen to learn more about ballet: the stories, the costumes and shoes, the vocabulary and the technique.

> I'll tell you the other thing I really like ... I liked it when you did the ballet thing ... I found that quite fascinating (Beth)

Learning more about the ballets also led to social engagement as we took two theatre trips to see productions we had discussed and worked with creatively in the sessions. It also led to reminiscence as all the dancers, bar one, had enjoyed the book 'The Ballet Shoes' (Streatfeild, 2011) as children. So much so, that Ruth bought a new copy of the book and shared it around all the dancers until finally being gifted to me to share with my daughters.

This final intellectual code demonstrates the difficulty of separating out and defining the themes since there is an obvious overlap with the final theme: social aspects.

4.4 Social aspects

The continuance of the group is sustained through the relationships within the group. Many of the relationships pre-exist the groups but even the new relationships manage to function to create the group as described as above.

The dancers did not generally use the word friendship to describe the group; instead they used the phrases in the following quotes.

> [in response to why do you come?] Socialising (Judith)
>
> You know it ... makes it a very enjoyable social session as well as a useful session (Kath) The company's good (Ruth)
>
> I think we enjoy this social hour don't we as well? (Sarah) We do, it is a social gathering as well and it's nice to have a cup of tea at the end of it (Freda)

> I mean we all said it's quite important, not just so much the exercise but the fellowship, the community (Beth)
>
> [Ruth] thoroughly enjoys the camaraderie (Kath)
>
> I feel that this group is more [pause] more friendly because it's intimate and it's in an intimate surroundings. (Beth)

However one dancer struggled with the social situation of the sessions, at the end of an interview she said

> Sorry I didn't say much but when others are around I just clam up. It's the same when we're dancing and have to come in close contact like when we link arms or something. I like them but now they're gone I can talk to you. (Lois)

Conradson (2003) describes one centre user, in his research, struggling to engage with a space of care and disengaging completely when the relational environment changed abruptly and greatly (by several staff leaving at the same time). In my study, Lois engages fully with the sessions but does find it difficult to relate socially to everyone in the group. But as with the physical challenges mentioned earlier, Lois takes responsibility for her own sense of safety and engages with the group in a way that is successful for her.

Only Ruth referred to needing to come to the session for social reasons.

> It's nice because I see people I wouldn't – well I know I see Kath and Beth but you know meet other people which as you get older you don't meet as many people (Ruth)

4.4.1 Support

Whilst the dancers generally did not discuss social support from the group, how they discussed support outside the group gives clues as to the support offered by social networks. I noted in the conversations with the dancers how frequently they mentioned that they would be physically incapable without support from friends or family

> "but it hasn't stopped us going [travelling] yet" "we can both do different things … which complement each other … [laughs] yes so we take up the slack for each other if you like because … there's some things that I can't do and some things that you can't do … but fortunately they're not the same things" "but there's not much when we go on our cruises that we can't do" "not at all. Not at all" (Beth and Kath)

> … I mean the lady next door to me has had a [hysterectomy] and she's driving now after 8 weeks … it took me nearly five months before I was ready to drive … and then [friend] [pause] … took me out. [Friend] said I'll come with you … [pause] and I mean [friend] went out with me and said "right, are you going to have a bash now?" So I got behind the wheel and I drove off and that was it. Reversed and brought it back and went to Tescos and said I'm fine now. I know I can manage it. I can do it. (Beth)

This links to the social model of disability (this is a model where disability is caused limits imposed on a person by the outside world (for example, inaccessible buildings) rather than 'the problem' residing with the individual (Burchardt, 2004)) but it is more than that. Use of the social model demonstrates how society can be constructed in a way that makes daily life difficult for an individual, this participant data suggests that society can potentially disable an individual but because that individual is plugged into support networks of friends and family then the disability is negated or overcome. Gignac et al. (2000) noted that many older adults find the thought of being dependent on others distressing. However, here the dancers are using support to maintain their independence.

4.4.2 Interest

Closely related to the idea of care, is the notion of individuals taking an interest in others. In his study of spaces of care, Conradson (2003) shifts the definition of care from *doing for* to *being with* or 'the proactive interest of one person in the well-being of another' (Conradson, 2003:508). In the conversations, two underlying ideas on interest were frequently referred to: that taking an interest or noticing another is an important way to build relationships and this interest happens a lot within the sessions.

The dancers noted that I would ask after individuals if they were missing from the session. Being in the session meant they were part of something and that they would be missed if they did not attend.

> Well it's something you [Maxine] always ask at the start. Have you seen, you know... (Beth) And it is as much about concern for their welfare as it is about are they coming … it's not [pause] it isn't just about … are we going to have that many bottoms on seats, it's about are they alright? (Kath)

The dancers also took a keen interest in the progress of my PhD. They said they enjoyed hearing about my progress and were enjoying the time we took to talk after the sessions for my research and Ruth went as far to declare:

> We're invested in your research too (Ruth)

Fisher (2013) notes four levels of care giving in a women's community space: noticing, taking responsibility, giving care and receiving care. At different times, the dancers and I all enacted these different four levels (another incident where I was the recipient of care will be detailed in *Watching*, section 5.4.3).

The dancers noted that the chat in the sessions, in between activities, was a method of social bonding. As will be seen in the next chapter, a frequent topic was family. Even in the conversations here, the dancers frequently referred to their family: Kath's children, Sarah's husband, Ruth's mum, Beth and Mary both talked about their gran. In the conversations, I also discuss my own family and indeed, a childcare 'hiccup' meant that one of my daughters was also present for one interview.

> Mary: What you call it, when you do climbing bars and ….
> Evie: mummy?
> …
> J: can't think what they call it. Any way that was all to do [to Evie?] ooo what have you done? Oh dear. [pause] oh it's alright. [to group] But that was all to do with using muscles and then relaxing and then the muscles... but that- now it's oh flipping heck my back

Whilst details of Mary climbing bars as a teen did not make it into this chapter, the image of her current back trouble is included in *Dancing* section 6.2.1.

4.4.3 Trust

There is a trust between the dancers and the dance leader that this is a safe space where the dancers can be successful and do not have to be self-conscious. Early in the analysis process, I found some quotes troubling.

> … I don't know whether I'm doing what I should be doing [pause] if you see what I mean (Beth)
>
> We just do what we're told (Ruth)
>
> We're an ideal class (Ruth) [because they do what they are told without question]   Well we might not be quite ideal but we're close (Kath)

I read this as 'obedience' which troubled the notion of the dancers having (and using) full agency in the sessions, to adapt or ignore instruction as they saw fit. I discussed the quotes with the Sittingham group and they did not view it as 'obedience'. Rather than thinking that the dancers relinquished their 'expert by experience' status to a supposed 'expert by training', instead I was invited to consider that the participants valued the knowledge of the dancer leader and were prepared to suspend their disbelief and have faith in my professionalism. The group contains many former teachers who knew the effort that went into planning a session and so were respectful of that commitment and willing to engage, perhaps more so than a participant who imagines the session coming together in a much more random fashion.   In the other groups, outside of the research, even the dancers that have not worked in education note that 'she writes things down, she's thought about it'. This reflection led the choreography for 'Hold my hand and listen with your skin' (see *Dancing*, section 6.2.2).

Other findings that reinforce the importance of trust between the dancers and the dance leader,

> I told the physio that I go to [dance session] … he said 'does she know what she's doing?' … I said yes I'm sure she does [laughs] (Ruth)

> [In answer to why do you come to dance session] and I wanted to support you [Maxine] as well (Sarah)

> [Also in response to why do you come] It was exercise I was looking for and I knew Maxine from being upstairs and I was [pause] you know, I've enjoyed it ever since (Freda)

> 'Yes I didn't want to miss because I know there aren't many' (Ruth) [I think she was referring to number of sessions left in the year] 'No there aren't many of us' (Freda) [but Freda apparently thought that Ruth was referring to the low number of members]

When asked why some dancers at Sittingham had joined the group, some replied that they wanted to support me personally in having a successful group. Again, this demonstrates the care between the dancers and the dance leader but in the opposite direction that might be expected. The dancers must have a level of trust in each other too. Beth describes an incident where the dancers were laughing 'not at each other but with each other' because they know each other well and are confident in their relationships.

Being able to be boldly creative and expressive, without fear, suggest a level of comfort with the setting and the people there which links back to how the dancers described the physical setting of the session. When I first proposed this research, I believed that it was the expressive nature of the creativity that led to the feelings of ease. I now wonder if I had it the wrong way around. I discussed the setting for the dance session much less with the Crantock dancers than the Sittingham dancers but I still had a sense that the regular attendees felt very much at home in the space. Most of the attendees used the centre regularly through the week, attending, for example, swimming, yoga, Zumba and chair based fitness class with a heart surgery recovery group. As mentioned in the Chapter 3 section 3.4.1, the process for accessing the session

at Crantock was quite complex and without someone to guide you to the right places, would probably be off putting for people more nervous about joining new groups.

4.4.4 Humour

> You … have a sense of humour with us (Judith)

The final theme I will consider here is humour. Humour is an important part of the sessions.   Beth had already noted the laughter that can occur between friends. In the quote above, Judith was explaining how she knew a dance leader was really in tune with a group: having a sense of humour was an important point of connection for some of the Crantock group. Using NVivo, a crude word count analysis of the conversation data found that laughs or laughter was one of the most frequently occurring words in the transcripts, not because people were talking about it but because I had noted in the transcript when people laughed during the conversations. The dancers also frequently referred to enjoying the session.

> I enjoy what do, and I enjoy the music, and I enjoy sort of all the activities (Beth)

> The joy of this group is that we do have fun as well (Kath)

In Dunbar et al. (2011), laughing in group is associated with elevated pain threshold, useful for people living with chronic pain and the laughing along with others additionally promotes social bonding through synchronicity. Wilkins and Eisenbraum (2009) confirm the social bonding nature of laughter and additionally cite research that suggests the physiological action of laughter provides an aerobic workout. This would suggest that the dancers are getting physical benefits from both the dance activity and being involved in a group that frequently laughs together.

4.5 End Notes

This chapter began considering the first research aim: Increase understanding of the experience of older people participating in community arts and health provision. There was a lot of discussion on the contrast between exercise and dance. The conversations additionally highlighted the work the dancers have to do in a session: looking after themselves and looking after others. They talk about having autonomy and taking responsibility for their own well-being. They discussed the care they feel and give during the sessions and a trust between the other dancers and between the dancers and the dance leader. There was talk of how people feel they are getting a better quality of life and how, for some of them, that may mean feeling worse before feeling better. There was also discussion of the aesthetics (which I am taking to mean the pleasurable audible components of the session. The conversations were also notable for the lack of information about the movement and dancing that happened. The next chapter 'Watching' offers the chance to further understand the first research aim and begin examining the second research aim: develop understanding of the experience of an artist leading community arts and health provision.

Chapter 5 - Watching

The previous chapter was based on listening to the voices of the dancers talking about the sessions. This chapter discusses my observation of video recordings of selected sessions.

The use of video allowed an extra layer of detail in the research, there are things that can be observed in the video that neither the dancers nor I mentioned in our reflections. I wanted to video the sessions so I had the chance to revisit the sessions in my embodied memory and give observing my full focus; it is difficult to act as a witness to one's own practice as witnessing takes me outside my working with the dancers and I might lose the ability to respond to them in the moment. Recording also allowed me to observe myself from outside, I have my sense of what I was thinking but I can also see what I am doing (including any unconscious actions) and the responses from the group: the videos gave me a chance to observe, not just reflect, on my own practice. Finally using video avoided relying on reconstructed memories of the sessions. Whilst I do not claim it offers an objective truth, if such a thing existed, as it is still viewed and filtered through my situated experience, however, it does enable me to recall exchanges more accurately.

This chapter seeks to uncover how the session is produced by the artist and the dancers: what is it that we do? Since the sessions are designed specifically for these particular dancers, it is not necessarily helpful to look at the content of the sessions but examining how and why the artist made decisions in response to these participants could have a wider application. The chapter intends to add to the work on the first research aim started in the previous chapter. It will also address the next two research aims: (2) develop understanding of the experience of an artist leading community arts and health provision and (3) consider some of the thinking underpinning the community dance artist's practice when working with older people. The reader is reminded that using the glossary may be helpful when reading this chapter.

5.1 Process

Over the year of my research, I filmed 16 sessions out of the 28 delivered. For this chapter, I selected three films from the Sittingham sessions (as already discussed in Chapter 3 in section 3.7 'Ethics', I was unable to film Crantock) that spanned across the research period. I chose three sessions from early, middle and late in the research period that also had accompanying session plans. I wanted a large gap between the sessions to ensure a variety of activities to be observed: a session plan will often be made up of a mixture of new activities and activities enjoyed from the previous week. The sessions differed in how closely they followed the session plan I had devised: the session from January 2014, I followed the session plan closely, the session from May 2014, I deviated slightly and the session in September is very different to the plan. The sessions also contrast between the levels of chat during the session. As an example, January's session plan is included in Appendix B.

Are the three sessions representative of the rest of the year? On viewing, I was surprised by how closely I followed the plan (I had assumed I disregarded the session plan more often) and how quiet the September session was (I assumed we always chatted a lot) but, having reviewed the other videos, I concluded there is nothing out of the ordinary about these three. My original plan was to look at where I deviated from the plan and explore what conditions had prompted that change but as I made changes 'on the fly' less frequently than I imagined then this chapter will note instead what can be observed in the sessions more generally.

5.1   Analysis

I viewed the videos at normal speed, pausing where necessary, and made notes on a table with a row per minute about anything striking, conversation topics, and any deviations from the plan. Each table was labelled with details of the film it was taken from. For analysis, since I was working with a transcribed description of a video, I attempted to code 'incidents' rather than code the text at a word or line level. Using the standpoint of my experience as

a dance artist, each incident was coded under planning, venue, activity, transitions, or props. I then used the framework from *Listening* (physical, psychological and social) to organise the findings under each code. With the codes in the framework, I started to comment on the findings and, at the same time, reflected back on the similarities or differences with the Crantock setting. After the initial coding, I revisited the videos to see if there were more findings that might sit under each code. This was particularly important for the code 'planning'. Additionally, the sensory nature of viewing the videos reminded me of embodied memories of other sessions (Pink 2009). These reflections are all included in the text.

The code *Venue* refers to how the space is used and includes how other objects within the space are used. *Planning* refers to how I intend for the physical, psychological and social aspects of the session to be enacted. *Activity* refers to the dance activities and *Transitions* refers to the space between activities. These two codes will be dealt with together as there is often a continuity between activity and transition. The final code, *Props*, refers to the physical objects I bring to the session for the dancers to use during the dance activities.

Since this chapter considers the decisions made in planning and delivering sessions, before continuing, it would be useful to consider what decisions are available to be made. Aspects of the provision such as venue, timing and price may or may not be in the control of the artist. At Crantock, I had no influence over any of these things, at Sittingham, all three were set by me in negotiation with representatives of the church and the dancers. The contents of the session plan, activities, props, music, ordering and relative timings, are all under the complete control of the artist but with much consideration for the participants. The coming together of the dance artist, the dancers and all the other factors is how the sessions are made and performed.

5.2 Venue

5.2.1 Physical

This section considers the physical aspects of the venue and the objects within the settings. The buildings and locations have already been described in great detail in Chapter 3. Here we consider the physical environment when the buildings are in use by the community dance groups. Firstly, I describe how the spaces are set up to enable the sessions, then I note the physical items that we (myself and the dancers) bring into the setting.

At Sittingham, as can be observed on the videos, my space is defined as the tables near the door, next to the power outlet. I normally sit in the seat closest to the music. I will move over if someone else takes my seat but I do warn them that it might be a bit loud for them sat in front of the speakers. Ruth, Kath, Sarah and Freda have pretty much settled spots where they sit every week. Beth and Mary are more fluid in where they sit, fitting in with the spaces left. However, one week, a new dancer joined the session, she came into the circle and sat in Ruth's chair. No one made any mention, in fact, I saw no evidence that it was even noticed. Ruth simply sat in the adjacent chair. I read this as the group working to make a new member feel welcome.

The chairs are always arranged in a circle. Not a semi-circle with my chair at the front but a genuine circle. On the video they can be observed set ready in a circle before the majority of the dancers arrive. There might be difficulty with copying and getting left and right hand correct if that was an issue for the groups but it is simply not considered important (when I use my right hand, a person sat opposite me is likely to copy by using their left hand (mirror image) whilst a person sat next to me would use the same hand as me). The chairs are arranged to allow adequate space to stretch out and not collide with the person next to you if they are moving in the same direction. The circle is designed to encourage a group identity, an openness (everyone can make eye contact with each other) and a sense of equality ('teacher' is not out at the

front on her own) however there is a possibility some people may find the openness threatening as there is nowhere to hide (Gough, 1999, Meekums, 2002).

At Crantock the space is more problematic, it is a dance studio with mirrors at the front. When standing, unless otherwise instructed the dancers arrange themselves in lines, each with their regular spot: a clear delineation between front and back, 'teacher' and dancers (the dance leader not leading the particular activity would place themselves elsewhere in the space, usually right at the back). To attempt to break down some of these barriers, the other dance leader and I would create circle dances, social dances and line dances that 'changed front'. Seated work would also be done in a circle although this did have a tendency towards being a semi-circle with a 'teacher' out in front if the dance leaders were not careful to guide the setting down of chairs.

There are a number of physical items that are brought to the space each week.

Figure 3 -   "The tin"

The 'tin' is left by the door for the Sittingham dancers to sort the money out themselves. On the videos, the dancers can be observed paying money into the tin of their own accord: I do not prompt anyone to pay. It is a deliberate choice to not check on individuals paying, although I might ask at the end of a session 'has everyone paid? Can I put the tin away now?' I feel this demonstrates a level of trust between us. Occasionally dancers will ask me to

acknowledge that they have taken the correct change from the tin, I usually attempt to wave it off and say 'fine fine' without even looking. Although sometimes, if I read this request for acknowledgement as someone wanting support with the numeracy aspect of the change getting (rather than the trust aspect), I will go over and help them. On the video of the session in May, Mary arrives late for the session, joins the circle at 10:39 but realises she has not yet paid and gets up to put her money in the tin, rather than waiting until after the session: it appears to be important to pay 'upfront' for the session. As already mentioned in Chapter 3 section 3.7 'Ethics', the fee for the Sittingham session is set at £3. I had previously attempted to reduce the fee to £2 when I first proposed to use the session as part of my research. The dancers decided that this was unacceptable to them and insisted on paying £3 regardless of my instruction/suggestion. At Crantock, there is no equivalent of the tin as the dancers pay the leisure centre; no money passes between the dancers and the dance leaders. I include the tin as physical as it represents the actual payment going in although this trust relates to a social human bond which is implicit and less tangible.

The session plan is an object that is used in many ways (an example is provided in Appendix B). It is an external memory device so that I do not have to remember how I intend the session to run, it is down on paper. The plan, however, does not contain, alone, all the information required to conduct the session. It is written in note form and acts as a prompt for me but would not enable another person, even an experienced dance artist, to run the activities as I had intended. Also, having a physical session plan means I do not have to remember what I did in previous sessions because I retain the plan (although I am now less scrupulous about noting where I made amendments to the plan during a session than I was when I first began leading sessions, so the plan is simply a record of what I had intended rather than what we did). It also acts as a symbol of my professionalism: I am not just making this up 'on the fly', I have thought it through. The plan is sometimes referred to in reference to the clock/time: I'm going to run out of time, we've got plenty of time left. The plan

is also a point of connection with the dancers who were teachers before retirement: we talk about how they are often works of fiction (because they are altered as the session progresses, indeed, Kath and Ruth call them 'Billy Liar sheets' - this also links to the idea of 'common ground' which is discussed in section 5.4.3 of this chapter.) If I forget to bring my session plan then I am chided by the dancers that I should not tell the dancers and then they will never know that I am not following the plan that I have left behind. On the video, I can be seen looking at the session plan frequently. In the May session at Sittingham, I can be seen looking at a session plan and realising it is for the Crantock group. It is difficult to know whether this absent minded bumbling around the planning and running of the session is an affectation, to make me less threatening, or a genuine reflection of my reliance on the session plan.

Reflecting on the video recordings of the sessions I observe that I also spend a lot of time looking at the iPod I use for the music. I am likely searching for the music track for the next activity. This suggests that, despite the key role that music plays in the session and my pre-planning of the session, I do not always set up a playlist for the group with the music I have chosen for that session. However, the iPod can act as an external memory: several times, if I have forgotten the session plan, if I have loaded the songs I intended to use on a playlist then that reminds me of the activity I had planned to do. Alternatively, when I am scrolling through the music, I might see another song or artist that I want to use for another activity either in that session or some point in the future. This might be because I feel the artist or the song will appeal to one or more of the dancers or because I feel the qualities of the music would be particularly suitable for a certain activity.

The dancers also bring items into the space: for example coats, handbags, walking sticks, or items to do with church business (in the May video, Beth and Kath bring baking they have done for Freda's coffee morning). I note the dancers leaving their personal belongings away from the seats they use for the dance session. The room is generally not visited by people other than the

group members during our sessions so there is little risk but still I see this as an indication of their level of comfort with the space and other people in the group. Or is it the expected behaviour that the dancers have become conditioned to? I see no indication that people are uncomfortable with this arrangement and it has certainly never been said that people must not have personal items close at hand although bags and sticks under chairs are potential trip hazards. At Crantock, the dance leaders place their belongings at the front near the sound system, most dancers place their belongings (bags and coats) on a sill along the side of the room, whilst the remaining few place their belongings at the back of the room.

The clock belongs to the centre but how we view time and the use of time is something unique to the groups. Both settings are flexible on the start time. On the videos, all three sessions appear to start late (it is scheduled to start at 10:30am). In the January session, Beth, Ruth and Kath are late because Kath received a phone call just as she was leaving for the session. In the May video, Mary arrives late because she had to wait for a repairman. However, the session always finishes on time (11:30am). The flexible start time suggests that the group is aware that it is not solely an exercise group but a social group too and that talk is an important and legitimate activity for group members to engage in. The clock is frequently referred in conjunction with the session plan as mentioned above. When planning, I estimate five minutes for each activity. I am assuming a few minutes to discuss the directions/suggestions and then a three minute song to accompany the activity. This is obviously not accurate but seems to balance itself out by the end of the session. The clock was additionally a source of conversation in the Crantock group as mentioned in Chapter 3 section 3.5.1.

Other physical items were brought into the dance space; 'the props' will have their own section towards the end of this chapter.

5.2.2 Psychological

The venue has an emotional relevance for the Sittingham dancers. As mentioned in the previous section (in relation to the dancers' belongings) and the previous chapter, the dancers at Sittingham describe feeling at home in the settings and appear comfortable in their surroundings. On the video they can be seen entering the room confidently (or, at least, not timidly) and engaging in conversation as soon as they enter.

5.2.3 Social

This section will detail the social aspects of the session which are connected to the building and its other functions. There is an overlap with the activity/transitions section since the social work is done at those points.

Before both the May and the January sessions there is extended conversation about activity connected with the church. Much of the relating between the dancers is through work activity for the church (for example cooking and running coffee mornings, maintaining the premises). This is mostly hidden activity, unseen by others but vital to the successful functioning of the church. It is possible that some of the dancers attend the sessions because they feel obligated to support activities that happen in church. Indeed in the conversations, Beth said that is why she first came along, although I do not believe that is the only reason she continues to attend. In a similar manner, some of the Crantock dancers are members of the sports centre so have access to sessions for free. Whilst the dancers may not feel obligated to attend to support the centre, I believe there is a sense of 'I've got it, I might as well make use of it'.

The group have strong bonds, in some cases, decades long friendships. Beth, Kath and Ruth arrive at the venue together. They are friends after spending many years working together. Beth and Mary talk frequently on the phone and Beth will tell me if Mary is unable to make a session or running late. Freda,

Sarah, Beth and Mary all attend the church where the group meets and take responsibility for many tasks around the church, including the running of regular coffee mornings. The dancing group is, therefore, another way of reinforcing their social bonds and establishing new ones. Social connections can be good for health because it is a gateway to information and guidance on health matters (Boneham & Sixsmith, 2006), I can recall a session where Sarah was explaining to the others in the group how to get a flu jab. Social connections may also be good for health because there is someone to notice if others are unwell or in difficulty (Valtorta and Hanratty, 2012), frequently Beth, Kath, Ruth or Sarah will fill me in on how one of the others is feeling after they phoned or visited their friend. Or because it models health benefiting behaviour (for example non-smoking, healthy eating, safe use of medication) to copy (Christakis & Fowler, 2010), Ruth joined our group after Kath suggested she would enjoy it, and Mary came along because her friend Beth was there.

5.3 Planning

This section details how I plan for the physical, psychological and social outcomes of the session and how I judge my success (or otherwise).

5.3.1 Physical

When I first drafted this section, I believed that I did not use physical goals for the session, however observation of the videos and reflection reveal this to be untrue. My main physical concern when planning is to structure the sessions so as not to be too tiring for frail bodies. I like to offer exercises that promote strength, stamina and mobility but my overriding concern is to keep the dancers safe: I would much rather the dancers leave a session thinking it was easy and they could do more than for them to feel shattered or in pain at the end. In the September session, for the activity using the small elastics, which comes towards the end of the session, Ruth can be observed making very small movements and sitting still for majority of the music, this is typical as Ruth has painful arthritis and is quite limited in movement. Recall in *Listening*, Ruth

feeling 'pleasantly tired' at the end of a session. In contrast, Kath can be observed making large and quite vigorous movements, despite it being the end of the session. This could suggest that alternating the activities has succeeded in not over tiring her.

It is quite easy to imagine a situation where people dancing more vigorously in a group (as Kath was doing) might encourage dancers like Ruth to exert themselves more than she had intended to: in a group situation it is easy to get swept along with the group momentum. Had this happened, I might have reminded Ruth it was ok to take a rest if she wanted but I would not have directed her to stop as this transfers the responsibility for keeping Ruth safe from her to me and sets me up as more knowledgeable on her experience than Ruth herself. I believe it is important to avoid the disempowering effect of having that very basic level of decision making taken away from the dancer. (If I was truly worried about one dancer doing too much then I would prefer to bring the whole activity to a close rather than single out a dancer.)

One way of planning for participant safety is the inclusion of a proper warm up in each session. I usually include one music track for upper body and another for lower body but on the January video I miss out the lower body, possibly because we started late and, unusually we do not use lower body until 20 minutes into the video. It is obviously cold in January (Ruth and Mary complain of being 'bitterly cold' before we begin and I am still wearing my scarf when we begin) so we spend just over 30 seconds rubbing our hands together and over our arms and legs trying to generate heat and promote circulation before beginning mobilising movements.

Another way of planning for safe movement is to vary the work through the session. I intend to mix up prop and no prop work, upper and lower body work and up tempo, energising songs with more relaxing music. In the video of the session in May, following the warm up, we can be observed doing a follow me

dance for the lower body ('Take me Home, Country Roads' (Denver)[9]). We then use the first prop of the session, the balloons, which I modify, towards the end of the music, into a creative activity with no prop ('Blue Moon' (Tormé)). I then offer the ribbon sticks ('Swan Lake: Act 1 No. 2 Valse in A-flat major (Previn)), followed by a creative activity which has the potential to be whole body ('Always on my mind' (Presley)). A final creative activity for the feet (With a little help from my friends (The Beatles)) and then the stretch ('The Sun ain't gonna shine anymore' (Walker Brothers)) which is included in each session with the intention of reducing muscle soreness. Sittingham always finishes with a seated circle dance 'The Bells of Norwich' (Unknown). This is the variety that the dancers refer to in the previous chapter in section 4.2.1.

I tend to think about creative outcomes more than physical ones however I have an unconscious knowledge of generating fitness outcomes so the physical work is planned for, just not in a conscious overt way. Whilst I mainly think of balloons as a fun activity that encourages social connection, I am also aware, that even with gentle musical accompaniment such as 'Blue Moon' (Tormé), it becomes a fast passed aerobic exercise that also requires hand eye coordination (Caspersen, 1985, as discussed in section 4.2.1). Sarah says in the January session just as we are coming to the end of the balloon activity 'What was it you said Maxine? This is gentle exercise?' meaning that she was aware of the intensity of this seemingly silly activity.

Some activities are planned to be dancer led (creative) whilst others are leader led (follow me dance). Again, having a mixture of these on the plan creates a variety within the session that helps make the session safe. I personally believe that activities that are directed by creativity are less likely to physically stress to the body in ways that might improve health. However in the video of the session in January, I devised a creative activity that encouraged a stretch of the

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[9] All music referenced in this chapter and Chapter 6 appears in a separate section of the references at the end of the thesis.

arms so could improve shoulder mobility and intercostal mobility (this activity is included in the session plan in Appendix B at 40 minutes).

Initially, planning was only coded on the video when what happened differed from what had been planned. If everything went to plan then the planning was invisible. Even when I deviated from the plan, the planning remains obscured from the dancers unless I mention it

When planning, if I choose the music first, I tend to make up a repetitive routine that I think is capable of being picked up (although possibly not on the first attempt) but is not too simple as to be boring. Being simple includes the necessity to not require distinguishing between left and right: I generally avoid directing which leg or arm a dancer should use, it makes it easier to be successful. The movements are generally suggested by the lyrics (most often for the arms, for example, the dance to 'Lipstick on your collar' (Francis) (this activity is included in the session plan in Appendix B)) or the rhythm (usually for the legs, for example, 'Just Walking in the Rain' (Ray)).

Sometimes, when planning choreography for the session, I will simply put a piece of music on and begin to move and see if I can use anything that emerges. This approach, however, usually leads to a structure for improvisation rather than a set choreography. For example, for the song 'Runaway' (Shannon), I offered the prompts of 'high, low, glide, front, back' (this activity is included in the session plan in Appendix B). I would expect dancers to mainly use their arms for this improvisation (although, nothing in my introduction to the exercise would exclude the use of other body parts). On the video, we can be observed starting 'high and low' by placing one arm in front of us at shoulder level and one arm in front of us at knee level and then swapping their relative positions. It only takes a few bars of music before the dancers start to explore the relative levels in their own way: Mary moves between high and low without bringing her hands to her shoulders in between, Ruth explores low with both hands, first to the right and then to the left and Kath explores high and low with her hands whilst tilting her body.

As already discussed, by the time of the first videoed session, I had been working with the Sittingham group for approximately two years. I had internalised many of the group's needs and no longer needed to consciously consider many aspects. In a similar way, the dancers had internalised how I worked and no longer needed reminding of expectations in the session. Therefore, there is an unspoken expectation that dancers will manage their own physical exertion to keep themselves safe.

An observer, or participant, can either view the sessions as physical exercise (you are going to move this ribbon stick to articulate the joints of the shoulder, elbow and wrist) or as fun (you are going to play with the ribbon stick to the music). I have often presented activities as both options, describing them as either fun or functional when I feel I have differing personalities in a session. I believe that humour is vital because if you start to examine the sessions through a grown up lens then they are silly. But, as defined in Chapter 2, creative activity can have a sense of playfulness. For example, the dancers giggled their way through the seaweed activity in January (this activity is included in the session plan in Appendix B at 10 minutes) and through the passing an invisible balloon activity in the September session. Amans (2013b) suggests that the use of humour is a holistic approach to work with dance and older people (instead of seeing ageing as a condition that requires treatment) and part of person centred practice.

5.3.2 Psychological

This section demonstrates the emotional and intellectual considerations of planning.

When planning the session, if I choose music first for an activity, it is either an artist I know one or more of the dancers like or one I have strong suspicion they will like. I consider this to be a key component of my person centred

practice (discussed in Chapter 2). Most of the time I succeed in gaining a reaction as seen on the January video. When I play 'Runaway' (Shannon), Mary gives a little gasp and then completes the activity in silence (apart from when she sings along). Later in the same session, I play 'It's only make believe' (Twitty) and Sarah tilts her head to one side and sighs. Sometimes I pick an artist that one dancer loves whilst another in the group loathes or has never heard of (especially difficult when I have a group with a large age span). Once, for a group not part of the research, I chose an artist that I thought the dancers would like (James Taylor) but the choreography did not fit very well so I was told not to bring it again. It is possible I 'gamify' the selection of the music by not telling the dancers what the song is when introducing the movement to see what their reaction is when the introduction starts.

As another approach to choreography, I might use a particular dance style as inspiration, so using the little nugget of Bollywood dance, Flamenco, Tai Chi or yoga that I know and creating an activity around it. A number of activities from this year of research are based on training I did with English National Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's project in February 2013. I would take aspects of a ballet, through the year we worked on Giselle and Swan Lake, for example, the music, choreography or mime and craft an activity that both sought to demystify the ballets and create accessible, fun movement. This allows the dancers to encounter music and movement patterns that they might not be familiar. This is another form of variety to keep interest high.

5.3.3 Social

This section demonstrates the way the sessions are socially planned. Since other than using the props (balloons, elastic and parachute) that promote social relating as discussed earlier, there is little social activity included in the written session plan for Sittingham. However, the unwritten expectation is that this is social exercise and that allowance will be made during the session for social activity, even if only tangentially related to the community dance activity. At

Crantock, however, social activities are included in the plan with the use of mixer dances and social dances.

Although not seen on the three selected videos, many times, especially if, according to the session plan, we are running late, I would negotiate with the group what activity they would like to do. For example, I might say, 'We only have time for one more, would you like to work with the ribbon sticks or the scarves?' or I offer a decision based on the music choice, 'Would you like a sixties pop song or an orchestral piece?' Occasionally having chosen a prop to work with I will ask if anyone has a particular song or artist they would like to work with. On the September video, I ask the group if we want two or three balloons. This negotiation is common and demonstrates a trust by the artist that the dancers are engaging fully and can have their preferences honoured without disruption to the session. I do get the impression, however, that, sometimes, some of the dancers wish I would make all the decisions so they can concern themselves only with enjoying the experience.

I have also used the groups for trying out new teaching methods or material. The Sittingham group can be seen enjoying the ballet related activities we do (on the September video, they can be observed making detailed plans for visiting the theatre to see Swan Lake), the group only initially tried these activities because I to practice an approach I had just learned on a course. The Crantock group were asked if a particular song would be appropriate to use in sessions: I was concerned the lyrics were too racy to be used. The song ('If I said you had a beautiful body' (Bellamy Brothers)) has become a firm favourite of many groups I work with, just as the dancers at Crantock predicted it would be. I am very careful of how I approach this experimentation. I present ideas that I think will be successful, I do not disrespect the dancers' time by bringing activities I have not fully thought through. Again, treating the dancers as the trusted collaborators I feel they are.

5.4 Activity and transitions

Activity refers to the dance activities we take part in in the session, *Transition* refers to the space around the activities.

5.4.1 Physical

In the previous chapter, the dancers discussed their approaches to adapting the sessions. When observing the videos, there is further evidence of the dancers managing their own physical well-being. In the video of the January session, in the pass the move activity (this activity is included in the session plan in Appendix B at 30 minutes), Kath creates a move that involves raising each arm alternatively above shoulder level. Beth is unable to recreate this move, so without any prompting from anyone else, Beth changes the level of the movement to be at waist height. If anyone does notice this change (which I consider unlikely because the concentration on your own performance is high in this type of activity), no one thinks to comment. In the previous section, I noted how Ruth and Kath responded differently to the same creative stimulus of using the small elastics. I took this to be evidence of the dancers managing their own well-being too.

The dancers are told often to interpret directions how they see fit. For example, in January, for the improvisation to 'Runaway' (Shannon), I say 'You're going to do high and low, whatever that means, you can do that'. I do not offer evaluative comments during dancing such as 'good' or 'I like that'. All contributions are equally valid: nothing needs my approval to be successful. This fits with the findings in the previous chapter (*Listening* section 4.2.2) where dancers discussed being comfortable with adapting the activities to match their current ability. However, I am unable to discern if when I demonstrate a movement and the dancers do something different, are they choosing to do something different, are they unable to do the movement the way I performed it (again, see the previous chapter section 4.2.2 when Beth describes being physically unable to copy a movement) or do they not see their

movement is different to mine.

In September, to the song 'Venus in Blue Jeans' (Clanton), a follow me dance (see glossary), I see people moving just their hands when I thought I demonstrated the whole arm moving. Also, I had intended a position of raised arms but the dancers make a movement of an arm circle passing through this position (again did they miss the detail or is it too difficult to keep their arm up?). As the dance artist in the session, these are interesting but ultimately unimportant questions. Unless my demonstrations are making the dancers feel uncomfortable then any prompt (just as any response) is valid. As discussed in Chapter 2, I do not give the dancers 'corrections', this means the session is what Amans describes as 'failure-free' (Amans, 2013b:120). My feeling is that the dancers feel very comfortable but I might be relying on imbalanced power relations to inform me.

As already mentioned, because the group became familiar with my methods after about a year of working together, I no longer explained why we might be using a particular prop. Hence, on the videos, it is not possible to observe me explaining an activity as either fun or exercise. In the May session, during the foot dance to the song 'Take Me Home Country Roads' (Denver), whilst the exercise demands strength in the quadriceps (to lift the thigh from the chair), Mary can be observed smiling throughout this exercise as she cheerily sings along. Later in the same video, in the ribbon stick activity, all four dancers can be observed smiling as they make relatively large movements that are likely to be helping support shoulder mobility. I suspect this demonstrates the dancers embracing the sessions as fun: I would expect to see more concentrated effort if the dancers were viewing the activity as exercise.

In the venue section, I discussed objects I bring to the session with me including the iPod and the session plan. I mentioned looking at these objects during transitions between activities. The act of me taking the time to look at the plan and the music can assist in the pacing of the session by allowing

dancers to recover from a strenuous activity or 'come back into the room' after an internal somatic activity. It also provides a gap for socialising if necessary.

5.4.2 Psychological

This sections discusses the emotional and intellectual aspects of the activities and the transitions between.

On all three videos I observe that I start the warm up without saying anything and speak only one or two words during the activity. I also say very little during the stretch and wordlessly move on to 'Bells of Norwich' (Unknown) (in the May and September videos) to close the session. Another example of this non-verbal leading is in the transition from one activity straight into the next. In the September session I can be observed moving directly from the upper body warm up to the lower body without any intervening explanation or other chat. At other times, I talk a lot more. In reviewing a video of me teaching another group, I find myself wishing I had talked less and paid more attention to the group through listening and observation. I feel that talking takes us 'into our head' and 'out' of our bodies; it is difficult to pay attention to sensations whilst also processing language. Whitehouse (1999) reminds us that listening also requires seeing, sensing and feeling. One of the big draws of dance work for me is that it can be based on a bodily/embodied relating rather than a verbal, abstract relating. The disadvantage is that this relating is difficult to capture in academic text (Conquergood, 2002).

This use of non-verbal leading is important but does not make up the majority of the session. More typically I will offer at least an introduction, if the choreography is more complicated or if it is a creative activity, then I will give a more detailed explanation. This transition is mainly filled with me talking. In the January session I take the unusual step of starting the music and attempting to explain the somatic process I wish the dancers to engage with as we go through it ('anchor your spine to the seat as seaweed to the seabed') (see the session plan in Appendix B at 10 minutes). The activity is unsuccessful

in that the dancers do not fully engage in an embodied way as they would normally do: they are chatting and appear to be having a fun time but this was not designed as a social activity. This is probably due to several reasons, the more creative activities are usually later in the session when dancers 'warmed up', also, this was the first session back after the Christmas break so the dancers had more chat to catch up on before they could get down to concentrating.

For the more creative imagination based activities I will offer lengthy explanations. Even after many years of practice, I am still nervous about presenting creative work and it is not always obvious who these long monologues are meant to reassure: me or them? Watching the video of the September session, I note I spent four minutes setting up a three minute activity and this was one they had encountered previously. I start by discussing my motivation for doing the improvisation on this particular theme (work connected with social networks). If the group was not so excited about my research I do not think I would have done this activity with them, the group are interested in my research (although judging by the response on the video, they are less interested in this lengthy explanation) so I am keen to share it with them. Again this demonstrates the care and interest in the group that was discussed in the previous chapter. I then explain how I want them to work with the images they have created and I give a lengthy explanation because I am keen for them to avoid simply miming the action they have chosen.   This activity is not just movement for exercise's sake, the creative choreography aspects are important to me too. I hope this attention to the aesthetic component of the movement ensures the sessions compare favourably with other exercise provision that the dancers have previously attended and not enjoyed.

Time is very flexible in the sessions, if I judge something, an activity or a transition, as needing more time, then it gets it. This readiness, or otherwise, to move on is not usually a physical need but more related to having fully

explored the intellectual or emotional aspect of an activity; moving on if complete or staying with an activity if there appears to be more creative material to explore. If I have a sense that an activity has gone on too long then I will try to bring it to a close, but it has to be done musically: I personally find it jarring to cut off music abruptly and will always try to fade it out although I am aware that I may be the only person in the group that cares about this. I do not consider this an artistic act, making the artefact of the session aesthetically pleasing, I consider it a person centred approach: paying attention to where people are possibly about to disengage with an activity and move on to keep involvement high. Activities that could have taken longer are more difficult to manage. I tend to stop an activity when the music ends, although the dancers can be observed continuing to move even when there is no music (whilst moving in silence is of course possible and, indeed, an important part of many somatic movement practices, the groups I work with always have musical accompaniment for activities I initiate). It is also quite common with an activity like the parachute or the balloons to ask if the group want to keep going for another song. In *Listening* section 4.3.1, the dancers talked about time passing quickly. However, in the January session, in the activity with the elastic, dancers can be seen loosing focus on the activity as the piece of music appears to go on for a long time. In the session, I notice, aloud, that the music seems very long and the act of naming it appears to reengage the dancers in the task.

Many of the transitions are filled with the dancers' reminiscence. I do not explicitly encourage this: having worked with people living with dementia (although it is important to note that none of the dancers in this thesis are living with dementia), I prefer to work with the imagination rather than memory (Basting, 2009). However I am aware memories a large resource for this group and the sharing seems to encourage social bonds. In the January session there is much talk about shops from many years ago and in the May session we talk about old family grievances and disagreements. Gibson (2006) lists ten benefits of reminiscence including creating social bonds, reinforcing self-identity

and serving to challenge power relations that may be inherent in the group by making the speaker the expert. Therefore reminiscence may simply act to reinforce the other aspects of the session.

The transitions are often filled with joking and laughter. Considering the song 'Venus in Blue Jeans' (Clanton), whilst demonstrating the final movement in the dance, I caution the dancers that it is a 'swirl not a waft' to raise a chuckle from the dancers. (Strictly speaking, using Laban's basic efforts, there is no difference between swirling and wafting, both would come under Laban's 'floating' (Newlove and Dalby, 2004).) I do not know that joking about my fondness for wafting was a strong reoccurring theme at either Sittingham or Crantock (it was definitely in another group outside of the research) however, poking gentle fun at the way I attempt to language movement certainly is a continuous theme.

Joking also happens during the activities. In the January video (see session plan in Appendix B at 10 minutes), the imagery of the spine as seaweed is met with gentle ribbing culminating in Sarah asking 'Does anyone feel seasick yet?' The dancers comment how they like how I explain technical dance terms (especially in relation to ballet) so they understand them but also laugh at some of the imagery I use to provoke a creative reaction. I tell Ruth in September that I am attempting to demystify the process of modern dance choreography for her, whilst not visible on the video, I am quite sure that I received a look of raised eyebrows when she says 'Oh' and Beth adds, 'I'm so glad you told us'. This continuous thread allows the dance artist and the dancers to share a sense of playfulness around the creative work.

Memory also gets used in occasional activities. In January, I use an activity where an individual dancer creates a move and then the group has to tag that on to the end of everyone else's move to create an instant choreography (this activity is included in the session plan in Appendix B at 30 minutes). In this session, I further complicate the task by getting the dancers to reverse the

order. I lessen the anxiety that an individual might feel (which I do not think any of the dancers present are actually experiencing) by saying

> Don't worry about what you're going to do, just do whatever you do and if it repeats something that's fine, yeah, just do something, anything that we can all copy.

By saying 'that we can all copy', I have made an expectation that all the dancers will consider the abilities of the others which could be seen as an extra pressure but I intend it to mean 'don't try and do something impressive, keep it simple'. Judging by the movements the dancers make, they understand my directions.

In the video of the September session, another psychological aspect of the session is shown: the dancers have to problem solve in some activities. As already discussed in the previous section (5.4.1), the dancers have to solve what I mean by high and low or swirl and press. In the dance to 'Walking in the rain', the dancers have to deal with doing an odd number of movements alternating feet. This means that it will not automatically transfer to the opposite side. The first problem to solve is to notice this and decide if it is a problem. In this case, it became obvious as the leg that went out to the side would not change without concentrated effort. The next problem to solve would be to decide if it was important to have a relationship between the feet tapping forward and the leg going out to the side. To me, it makes more sense to alternate the tapping feet and the leg going out to the side and then repeat the pattern starting with the leg that just went out to the side. This is the solution I shared with the dancers, it is not obvious from the video footage if the dancers employed my strategy or if they came up with an alternative. Whilst having this problem to solve in the session was accidental rather than by design, similar puzzles do crop up occasionally.

In the September video, the dancers tell me off for suggesting they do a simpler version of a dance to 'Venus in Blue Jeans' (Clanton): they want the

challenge of trying to fit the faster movement with the music. I have assumed this to be a mental challenge, of being able to process the movements in time, rather than the physical challenge of the moving the wrists quickly with the music.

Another aspect of the psychological in the sessions is who possess what knowledge. I hold knowledge about the plan for the session, experience of running similar sessions with different people and a more general dance background. The dancers hold the knowledge about their health and conditions, they also possess a wider knowledge of the history of the local area: in the January session, they school me on the history of a large department store in Manchester city centre. Additionally, there is an uneven distribution of knowledge about children, gleaned from work as a mother, grandmother, aunt and teacher. Whilst not of direct relevance to the work done in the group, it is often used as a topic of conversation to facilitate social bonding. A related familiar topic is primary schooling as I have current experience as a parent and the dancers have previous experience as both teachers and parents.

5.4.3 Social

This section details how the activities and transitions enable the social aspect of the group.

The social nature of the group is facilitated by common skills such as turn taking, affirming during other people's talk (head nod, aha etc.) and giving attention to other members of the group. This is most evident in the transitions where someone is talking. It is very rare to hear two voices talking at once, attention is always focused inside the circle, even by the dancers who may not be picking up all the verbal information due to hearing impairment. Nardi and Whittaker (2002) suggest these behaviours are the foundations for building social bonds.

When the dancers talk about poinsettias on the video, before the start of the session in January, Sarah and Beth take turns discussing their success at keeping the flowers over the Christmas period whilst Mary nods assent. As the conversation comes to a lull, Ruth checks that the conversation is about the flowers before offering her experience looking after the plant that had belonged to her neighbour. All of us look at Ruth as she speaks, Kath nods and Sarah says 'yes' at appropriate places. This brief conversation about poinsettias gives the group both a chance to reinforce social bonds and be a topic on an experience they share in common.

I am like the other members of the Sittingham group because I have a husband (everyone in the group has been married although some are now widowed or divorced) and children (not all the dancers are mothers), I have been a teacher and have lived in Greater Manchester for many years. I am outside the group because I am the dance artist leading the session (I am notionally 'in charge') and because I am many years younger. Nardi (2005) notes this 'common ground' is how a group sustains itself week after week. Clark (1992) offers categories of mutual knowledge (in this case, the mutual knowledge is particular as we know of each other's personal circumstances) and community membership, we can talk about this common ground because we are all part of a community that has experienced it (motherhood, teaching or living in Manchester). I shift between being member of the group, participant in parenting conversations and receiver of social history lessons to being the person responsible for the health and safety of everyone else and managing the use of the time we have together. The activity we do here is closely related to education and therapy but is neither.

In January, one of these common ground topics discussed is looking after dogs: Mary and Beth both share stories of looking after large dogs for acquaintances. When I introduce the next activity, Sarah brings the conversation to another area of common ground: lack of sleep due to small children. This topic brings me back into the conversation (I have no experience of looking after dogs) and

one of the child free women in the group relates the topic to her own strange sleeping habits as a child. Everyone can share in the common ground topics and feel a part of the group.

There is no hierarchy around who can speak to whom: everyone can, and does, talk to every other member. I have the power to declare the time for talk over by choosing to start the music and start moving. However, a dancer may also make a statement (e.g. 'right', 'anyway', 'let's get on with it') that indicates that they feel it is time to move on. At the beginning of the September session, for instance, Beth prompts the group gently 'Right, we'd better get on with it'. Even so, I am the only one that can generate the next activity. Frequently, on all the videos, I can be observed waiting for dancers to finish speaking before either speaking myself, to introduce the next activity, or starting the music. I feel this is respecting the social needs of the group whilst balancing the explicit intention of the group to be physical exercise and remembering that people have paid to come to the session. This makes the pacing of the session my responsibility but it is done in response to the others in the room.

The dancers do have the option to choose to speak whilst moving. They are less likely to do this when the task is a creative one, I have stressed previously the importance of not commenting whilst others are being creative in case you break their flow. This was particularly important in creative work where they had to choose their own imagery. In a session not reviewed for this chapter, we improvised a piece using the song 'Destination Anywhere' (The Commitments) to explore images of a 'safe' place. I explained that it was important not to discuss images during the exercise as our safe place is very personal to us and talk of your own, say, country garden image might disrupt someone else's seaside scene. I ensure time to discuss the images afterwards so they know there is an outlet for them eventually. I control that silence, if someone did start to speak they would get 'a look' and possibly a good humoured shush. However, in the January video, all members of the group can been seen talking during the activity to imagine your spine as seaweed. Talking

over activities that require less mental effort from the dancers, for example the warm up, copying the dance artist or manipulating a prop without a creative subtext, is acceptable. This talk would normally be a continuation of the talk from the transition (for example the parachute activity in the January session) or prompted by the activity (even tangentially).

The space between activities is usually the space for one of us (just as likely to be me as any other member of the group) to tell a story, usually prompted by the previous activity or a sudden thought. In the May session, after an activity that involved passing an invisible ball, the dancers move on to talk about having invisible friends as a child (because they play with an invisible ball, 'An invisible friend can't play with a real ball can they?' (Mary)) to playing 'two baller' against a wall, to children juggling, to doing handstands against a wall ('same wall' (Mary)) whilst I hand out props and set the music up for the next activity. As already mentioned, I normally wait for an appropriate lull in the conversation but on this occasion, the conversation showed little signs of slowing down and the next activity required little brain processing so I started the music and let the dancers transition into movement whilst still talking.

In the May session we spend nine minutes between two activities talking about topics only tangentially related to the session. It starts with Beth asking whether ballet dancers (we had been doing work on the ballet Swan Lake and they know I also teach ballet to children) are thin because they do ballet or do ballet because they are thin. The conversation then moves to a flattering full length mirror belonging to Kath's sister (because I mentioned that dancers spend most of their work day looking at their reflection) and then switches to horse riding, which is the activity Beth did as a child instead of ballet.

Some topics of conversation carry over through the year. Before the research period, there were a number of weeks where Mary was either late or missing because of having to wait in for various workmen. This would normally be shared with the group in the transition period waiting for the session to start.

'She's waiting for a man' became a phrase that would be repeated often and elicit comedy raised eyebrows and knowing nods. This introduced a level of 'sauciness' to the group that might not be expected of a group of older middle class, white women. It had always been there but instead of it being an occasional surprise, during the research period it became a continuous thread. In the May session, the thread is continued when Beth and Kath walk in and tell me 'Mary is on her way, just parking the car, she had a man at half eight', I reply, 'She's a busy woman.' Four minutes later, Mary walks in saying 'My man's been'. Beth says 'I've spread the word, I like to keep your reputation intact'. Mary attempts to clarify: her burglar alarm now works. Silver (2003) suggests that I have no right to be surprised at this talk, post-menopausal women, in their invisibility in society, are freed from the conformity of gendered expectations around sexual activity and desire.

There is much sharing of laughter in the sessions. In January, we joke about the funny conversations we have whilst my camera is running, in September we laugh about grumpy spouses and in May we laugh about the silliness of passing an invisible balloon. *Listening* introduced research that demonstrated social and health benefits of laughter in a group. Whilst research has demonstrated that laughing with colleagues creates group cohesion (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013), fun is not inherent in the art form. I have discussed with drama colleagues about whether it is laughter that creates the group rather than the common goal and they replied that they worked hard in their sessions and there was often very little laughter in early sessions when the group was coming together. The company Dance United does not tolerate silliness in their sessions; their ethos is to attempt to draw the young people they work with into organised, professional, productive habits (Dance United, 2013). So humour is not inherent in community arts practice but it is the lifeblood of the sessions I run. I suggest humour is important because of the process, rather than product, nature of the workshops. Both my drama colleagues and Dance United are working towards an end performance. The activities that I do are not built on week to and, within a session, they very rarely link to each other thematically.

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In September, we revisit two activities we had done the week before. Neither required recall of material generated in previous attempts: the dancers are reminded that they have done the task before but the unspoken expectation is that they create something new each time, possibly with more confidence since they have experienced it before. The mime from Swan Lake activity had also been repeated so to facilitate familiarity when they went to the theatre performance.

Another topic that recurs frequently is reminiscence around family. There is a possibility that people generally make most of their memories with their families but I think the emphasis on family is more related to their gender and their roles as care providers. One of the dancers without children speaks often of a nephew that she seems to be as close to as any other parent with their adult child. The stories of family are used to foster a closeness; I know what you mean, I have been there too. Again, this is another example of using of Clark's (1992) common ground to establish and strengthen social bonds. In the January video, I talk about my youngest daughter who does not sleep through the night, other mums tell their stories of sleepless nights and of less than helpful husbands, one dancer tells a story of her own strange sleeping routine as a child. All the stories seek to offer a little personal information about the individuals and declare each a member of the 'we know what that is like' club. Stevens and Tilburg (2000) list listening, self-disclosure and empathy as some of the skills that are required when developing friendships.

This talk is less common at Crantock. There are topics that recur: partner's illnesses, children/grandchildren, weddings (the other dance leader got married during the year of research), the music we use and places they used to go dancing. However I have a definite sense that there is less chat at Crantock than Sittingham. I feel this is to do with it being a mainly standing session; it is not so easy to stand around and chat, standing reminds you of the work you have come to partake in.

Whilst not evident on the video, the January session is filmed the week before my uncle's funeral. The week before the filming I had cancelled the session because, with grief, I did not feel up to running a session. Before turning on the camera, according to my journal notes, I cried on one of the dancers: I experienced feelings of support and being cared for. In my journal I reflected on how the session meets my needs as well as the dancers. I had not considered myself as gaining benefits from attending until that moment, but then it became obvious that I was not a neutral, passive agent in the group, if I did not gain from the group (financially or otherwise, emotionally in this case) but this is how the artist is conceptualised in most arts and health literature. This is further demonstration of how care flows both ways within the sessions. Additionally, being able to be honest about how I was feeling is the condition of 'congruence' in person centred practice.

In the September session, the dancers hardly talk at all; there is virtually no talk in between that is not directly related to the task just completed or about to start. The longest time between activities is three minutes and I initiate most of the chat in that transition. In the January and May sessions, by contrast, there is much chat between activities. There is no obvious reason for this difference.

5.5 Props

The final section of this chapter explores the props used. I will consider each prop in turn and discuss the physical, psychological and social aspects together. The props are the items that I bring into the dance space for the sole purpose of being used by the dancers.

I control access to the props: props can only be used once I have handed them out. This is not true of all groups, some groups might grab a balloon whilst we have the parachute or the blanket out but I have never known anyone to go through my bags looking for a prop. I have led sessions where I put props out

in the centre of the room and let the dancers pick whatever they felt attracted to working with at that moment. I could only manage that with very small groups (four people at a maximum). The more vocal members of the Crantock group voiced their displeasure at using props so I quietly phased out using them (of course, the dancers still had access to props through the other dance artist). Props are usually used with little direction, as the dancers have been working with them for two years, we did a lot of the initial exploration of the prop before the research period began.

It is not uncommon for me to hand out a prop and start the music with no instructions, as I do with balloons, or with a scant introduction 'you know, do stuff with it' handing out the elastic in September (only because this group are extremely familiar with both props) or 'what kind of mood are you in?' with the ribbons in September (meaning did they want to waft or flick). Dancers now have the knowledge of the capabilities of the prop and the expectations of the group, they additionally have the confidence to explore the prop without having to check in with me or the other. It is interesting to note that the elastic is not for 'pinging' here; other groups have tried to flick me with the elastic or turn it into a catapult. I am not sure that such a possibility has occurred to the Sittingham dancers.

In January, I note that I attempt to look each person in the face and say 'Thank you' as I collect the props in. In the observation notes, I remark that this is a habit carried over from working in a residential settings or with a group of people living with dementia – something about reaffirming their humanness, individuality and agency. In a group for people with dementia, I would likely add their name to my thanks. Of course, no one in this group has dementia and all are still involved in social networks so are less likely to benefit from this kind of attention.
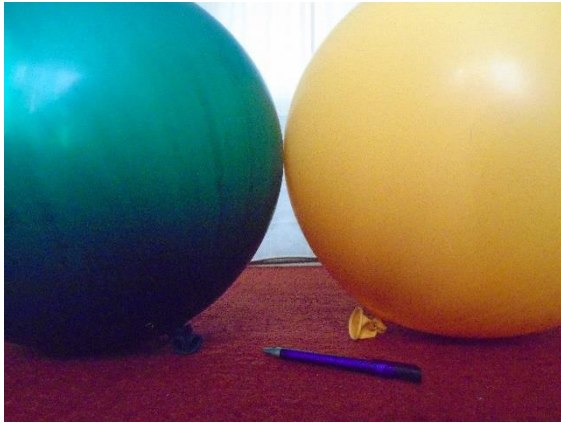
Figure 4 -   "Balloons"

Balloons

The balloons are large: about chest width when fully inflated. The dancers at Sittingham use the balloons by throwing them from one dancer to another. Using the balloon can allow for connection (looking directly at and making eye contact with the person you are about to pass to), possible falls prevention work (by accustoming people to incoming information on peripheral vision) and cardiovascular exercise (think about basketball players warming up). In the January video, Sarah comments on the vigorous nature of the balloons activity. On the video, I see everyone attempting to make an accurate pass and there are apologies when a balloon strays between two people or sails over someone's head. In September, Sarah says 'that one goes nice and straight, that green one, doesn't it?' implying that the yellow balloon has a less predictable flight path. In January, the balloons are new, but by September they have been used many times and are more than a little misshaped. I (and subsequent conversation has revealed that the dancers do this too) monitor which people have recently had the balloon and make it an intention to pass to anyone who has not had it for a while. Anyone can and will pass to anyone, which aids with the inclusivity of the session and also relates back to the social skill of turn taking. In my experience, other groups can be hesitant to pass to more frail or slower moving members of the group, not so here. This activity prompts laughter when people are caught by surprise, the balloons collide in mid-air, when someone gets passed both balloons or when someone goes to

pass to a person already holding a balloon.

Figure 5 -   "The Ribbons" and "The Scarves"

Ribbon sticks

Ribbon sticks have two main roles in the session, either to waft or to flick. My first ribbon sticks were bought from Jabadao (n.d.) who suggest using them with frail people as they give access to large movements (with the tail of the ribbon) with a small amount of effort and also noisy movement with a small flick of the wrist. When the dancers at Sittingham use the ribbon sticks, they work the mobility in the joints of their arms (and spine if the dancer is using larger movements). When the whole group uses the ribbons, it makes the room colourful. Using the scarves (which are not seen on the videos) has similar benefits to the ribbon sticks, except you cannot flick them and people tend to work with them at a high level so they get both muscular and cardiovascular exercise. Both props bring beauty and colour into the session.

Figure 6 -   "The Parachute"

Parachute

The parachute is Kath's favourite activity. She is unsure of what physical benefits she might be getting from it (it is, in fact, a strong resistance exercise for the arms and the lifting of the arms give a cardiovascular workout too) but it gives her great pleasure to see the movement and the colour of the fabric wafting up and down; another aesthetically pleasing prop. On the video, Mary makes an excited sound when she sees the prop coming out of the bag. The parachute is also a unifying prop: all the group hold it together and we have to work in concert to make to float up and down, ripple or direct the other props we sometimes put on top (balls or balloons). In the January video, the parachute connects us as a group and then we talk all the way through the first verse before several people start singing the familiar chorus.


Figure 7 -   A "Small Elastic"

Elastics

I have two ways of using a wide piece of white elastic knotted into a circle. Either as one giant ring that the whole group holds together or as smaller elastic rings to be used individually. Since the research period I have used the elastic much less because members of the Sittingham group have described it as their least favourite activity (they were being very careful not to say they dislike any activity). Beth does not like the elastic because she finds herself worrying about her sore shoulder being pulled around with the giant elastic. In a session not videoed, Ruth was talking about how lovely it was to work with beautiful things (the props) whilst holding the elastic, it looked very sad in her hands. I thought that a piece of elastic probably was not one of the beautiful things Ruth was referring to.

5.6 End notes

This chapter has considered the experience within a session for the dancers and the dance artist based on observing videos of the sessions. As in the previous chapter, themes of dance versus exercise, trust, care, autonomy and aesthetics (both visual and aural) were highlighted. The sessions are based on relationships. These relationships are developed through talk of common experiences and sharing of memories. The intellectual challenges of memory, coordination and interpretation were also noted. The unconscious aspect of both the artist's planning and the nature of the group's use of social skills to promote bonding were discussed throughout. Using the video also gave access to a layer of information that would have not been accessible through interviews of reflection alone. The non-verbal aspects of the session and the unconscious actions of the artist and the dancers were rendered visible in this chapter. The third research aim (consider the underpinning thinking) was considered in relation to props, activity and social nature of the sessions. Also the concept that any response is valid was introduced. The next chapter moves from the standpoint of an external witness to an internal one.

Chapter 6 - Dancing

Listening considered what the dancers said about the sessions and *Watching* examined what could be observed in the sessions. This chapter contains reflective movement about the sessions and the research process. In this chapter I draw on the improvisational movement practice and choreography made through the research process to give extra insight on the community dance practice and the experience of doing research into that practice.   The chapter offers additional embodied insight to research aim (3) and begins to reflect on research aim (4).   The chapter seeks to demonstrate an embodied knowing of the dance groups and of the process of researching and becoming a researcher.

The videos discussed in this chapter are accessible on YouTube at the following link

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeBr2PsnRJQF3SThDfwomA8U4QWjTH nLj

Shortened link http://bit.ly/1LCPqZ8

The sense making process used to create and interpret this dance work is quite different to the sense making process involved in creating text. You will have a very different conception of the ideas in this chapter if you read the text without looking at the videos. Hence I strongly suggest that the reader watches a video before reading the accompanying text. (However, it is not necessary to watch all the videos before beginning reading, although doing so will not confuse the understanding of the viewer). I make this suggestion so that the viewer's initial response to the pieces is from the movement rather than my textual description. In this way I am trying to subvert the traditional dominance of the textual word in pointing the reader towards watching embodied movement.

6.1 Theoretical positioning

Richardson (in Richardson and Adams St. Pierre, 2005) describes writing and re-writing as a sense making process; she uses the process of writing to find out what she thinks about a topic. In much the same way, a dancer can use improvised movement to explore their embodied response to data (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2008, Leavy, 2009). Elsewhere, Richardson also describes having to write her way out of 'a crisis of representation'; (Ellis et al. 2008:265). I have used dance in a similar way when 'stuck' on how to write this thesis (and many of the reports required of me during my research journey). These ideas are similar to authentic movement practice which uses movement to allow unconscious thought to bubble through to consciousness (Adler, 2002). Authentic movement follows a structure of moving, witnessing, reflecting and speaking (Adler, 2002) which parallels the listening, watching, dancing and reflecting form of this thesis. I have been playing with this method of dancing as thinking throughout my PhD journey. Cancienne (2008) says to strengthen dance as a methodology, more practitioners need to write about how they use dance so I offer this chapter as my contribution.

Judith Butler argues it is important to include the body in research because it has been largely ignored in the Western academy for centuries: it has been treated as the lesser part of blunt dichotomies such as body/mind which is equivalent female/male which in turn is equivalent to emotional/rational (Lloyd, 2007). So this section offers an embodied response as the primary way of analysing data.

To accompany each dance piece, I provide a brief text stating the starting point for the movement and how the piece was developed. All the movement in this chapter was created through improvisation. Improvising requires the practitioner to bounce between the known and the unknown (Foster, 2003), this is much the sense I have when reflecting on the research process. In the studio, an improvisation is about exploring, uncovering, testing out ideas. Some work beautifully, some fall flat, and it is rare that you can accurately guess which ideas will be in which category until you physically get into the

dance space and work on trying them out. And so it was with research. Beware that the following videos are not the data, they are merely visual trace left behind my embodied knowing but the videos are the best (imperfect) way of sharing my knowing.

Cancienne (2008) writes about adjusting her choreography to suit a social scientist audience rather than an arts audience. I find the underlying suggestion troublesome that social scientists might be less capable of connecting viscerally with a performance than other people (Conquergood, 2007). I have not made any choices to make a piece more accessible to people who are not interested in dance (for one reason, I am not sure how I would go about doing such a thing). The dance is not supposed to be read as a text by attempting to translate each movement into language but as a whole piece that communicates and connects on a non-verbal, emotional level with an audience.

I have long believed that there is no correct way to view art. We each see a work of art from our own unique standpoint: our histories and our social structures shape what we can and do see and feel in reaction to an art work. Lachapelle et al. (2003) suggest after the initial affective encounter with a piece of work, there then follows a process of gaining intellectual knowledge about a work and the artist which is integrated with the original encounter to produce a more full knowing of a piece of art, hence the invitation to view the videos before reading the text. So I offer here works of dance and creative movement which I share the context in which it was created but I do not offer a correct meaning or reading of a piece. That is the work of the viewer and, as with the creative work in the sessions, all responses are valid. Sklar (2001) notes that what is known through movement can never be adequately expressed in words, hence this work should not be treated as a 'text' to 'read'. Eisner (2008) reminds viewers of arts in research that there is a difference between 'the descriptive and the evocative' (Eisner, 2008:6). Arts in research is supposed to be processed by the viewer's imagination and evoke a sense of the artist's feelings (Barone and Eisner, 2012).

Running parallel to the chapters of this thesis, I present a selection of dance pieces each relating to a chapter: Listening, Watching and Reflecting.

6.2 Listening

6.2.1 Body parts

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_BpAP3ptgc and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VC4MrDw3_DE

(Music: 'Breathing Machine' and 'Lakelight', Michael Price)

Two versions of the same piece that was presented as a live performance at 'Performance and Public Engagement' held in York, UK and as a video at 'Women and Ageing: New Cultural and Critical Perspectives' in Limerick, Ireland, both in 2015.

To choreograph this piece, I selected a number of quotes from the conversations (some of which have already been discussed in *Listening*) and spent some time with them in the studio space looking to see what images they suggested. I revisited this process several times before settling on a structure for improvisation (I did not set the choreography in the sense of '4 swings of the right arm then turn' but as a framework 'first swing the arms loosely wherever you are facing and then do fast feet'). I knew that the piece would be performed 'in the round' so I attempted to choreograph without a fixed front. Being able to watch two videos of the same improvisation framework gives an idea of what is fixed and what is flexible when working in this way.

I share the quotes I based the choreography on to share more about the creative process, the point is not to be able to work out which move goes with which quote, the piece should stand on its own without the viewer having knowledge of the details of the conversations. Unless otherwise noted, the quotes are all by Sittingham dancers. The quotes used in order of being first seen are:

When I first came … you used to do quite a few breathing
exercises … at that time … I was being stabilized from atrial
fibrillation to get my heart rate and breathing as it should be.
They were really really helpful and I did try some of them at
home coz it did help er because it's stabilized now, it doesn't it
doesn't matter quite so much and I don't notice it quite so
much … but at the beginning when I did need it I did notice it.
That I did notice the benefit

I know there's things when I can't move this arm. I think … if I
was being honest I would say it does bother me a bit because I
can see the when you doing … these kind of movements
[moves her left hand from side to side] and you're sort of
mirroring it … and my arm doesn't so I think to myself should I
put it this one higher and this one comes [raises right arm to
demo limited movement] it looks funny.

When first developing the piece, I had a whole section on moving the arms but
with a limitation suggested both by the quote and my knowledge of the
dancer's abilities. In the eighteen months since originally hearing this quote I
am not sure we have yet fully resolved the dilemma of how best to
accommodate her shortened range of motion in the session. However, as
discussed in the two previous chapters, the dancer does seem comfortable in
adapting the sessions to her capability. I have to be very careful about how I
phrase setting up activities because I want to be encouraging of dancers to
explore their full potential but I have no formal background in rehabilitative
exercise and must be wary of sounding as though I have medical knowledge.

I have two completely different feet now because I had a
bunion removed from one … and it's nothing like the other one.
And I hate to look at the two together you know

My feet now, I used to like my feet. I don't now. Now that's
age. … And it is painful this one.

I mean I have one new knee, the other's going so that's age I
suppose but … this arm is not good [waves left arm in air]
because when I was 13 or so I fell off my bike and dislocated
my elbow … I was trying to ride with both hands on one
handlebar. I do not recommend it

After watching several videos of me improvising, I noticed that I have a tendency to work with body parts in isolation so when working with image of pain and impairment in hips, knees, feet and shoulder, I wanted to try to use all the parts simultaneously. I was also attempting to make the particular body parts an all-consuming focus as I imagined experiencing chronic pain might be. This use of improvisation is a way into the person centred concept of empathy.

> Maxine: How was that?'
> Dancers: 'hard work' 'yes it was quite hard work' 'I felt we'd worked'

To create a feeling of 'working hard' I had to do work that got me out of breath. It did not occur to me to do something that required muscular endurance or strength or something that required concentration. These all fit the conception of working hard but I chose the version of working hard that came easiest to me.

> I like being able to sit down when I want. If I felt I wasn't able to miss some dances then I wouldn't come at all. (Crantock dancer)

> I know Ruth feels comfortable because she feels that she can do the bit that she can do and stop when … she wants to, and I think if she didn't feel like that she wouldn't feel comfortable coming

For me, stillness in creative movement usually means either focused attention or recuperation. Steve Paxton described all the micro movements that the body must do to remain still and balanced as the 'small dance' (Albright, 1999). Mabel Todd (as cited by Franklin, 1996 and Olson, 1998) describes a position of constructive rest where a still body can realign itself and tissues can recover from the strain placed on them.

> My experience of exercise is that you in the past which I tended avoid is that you feel jolly sore after it. But this time you don't, you feel looser

In a much later conversation, Ruth states that she has no goals for attending, perhaps experience has taught her to have low expectations of exercise. I have an overall intention, when session planning, to provide easeful movement.

Frequently, the literature regarding older people and exercise is keen for older people to have more strength in an effort to combat frailty and reduce falls risk (for example Skelton and Beyer, 2003, Howe et al., 2007, Lord et al., 2006) but I am more keen to work on easing joints to restore mobility. This ease of movement is usually provided through working with props as discussed in *Watching*.

> I limped in as well (Crantock dancer)

I spent time working with limping in a piece of its own. In my journal I reflected that the movement felt forced and pantomime-esque. I was unhappy with this improvisation. It felt like the movements were coming from outside direction rather than the organic, somatic, internal sensation led way of working that I prefer. I noted some interesting moments in the improvisation such as the idea that moving in pain is preferable to being still and stiff. Further discussion of my reaction to this quote is in the 'Artist as Researcher' section of the next chapter.

> I think it sometimes is good to push yourself that little bit further

Closely linked to the idea of hard work above, I expressed 'that little bit further' as an extremity of limb. By pushing the height of the leg I was using technique and strength a little but I was also mindful that I had to perform the movement for an audience so could not push to the extreme of either and ensure a reliable performance.

> I've found difficulty with my fingers now. I find I can't grip things like I used to

I work with a dancer (in a group outside of this research) who often chooses not to join in with sessions. 'I just like to watch' she says to a neighbour 'her [Maxine's] hands fascinate me.' I sometimes offer a hand dance as a workout and we acknowledge the difficulties we have with our hands but how often do I use my hands in a way that dancers cannot emulate? Does it matter since we emphasize the unique nature of our response to the creative stimuli? My

intention is that the safe space nature of the session means that the dancers fully believe that all response are valid and acceptable.

> it wakens us all up in the morning

When Sarah originally said this quote, I think she was referring to the 'hard work' nature of the session but in the piece I had a yawn-like stretch. A waking up movement can feel luxurious and be a moment's pause before beginning the busy of the day. I hope the dancers have some sense of this waking up too.

> When I wake up in the morning now I can't leap out of bed like I used to … the reason I can't leap out bed now is because my body won't let me do that. I've got to lie there for a bit … and really come to and then I [describes and demonstrates wake up/stretch routine] and then eventually and I think [shouts] ooooooo flippin heck [laughs] … and I'm walking to the bathroom like a duck [laughs]

> We know that one, walking like a duck

The original quote was told with much laughter and humour so I felt I did not have to treat the image reverently and had a little fun with the image. As discussed in *Listening* and *Watching*, humour is an integral part of the sessions. I did realise how my body now lies to me (lack of practise or ageing) when I think I am holding an extreme position that I have not moved as far as I think I have.

> My eyes. I had perfect vision when I was young- a young woman. Now I can't see to … read anything even very large print now

I showed the piece to some of the Sittingham dancers and they were in an almost stunned silence. I had explained that I had based the choreography on our conversations but they could not move from the idea that the choreography must be based on movements they had done in the sessions. One dancer thought that the progression from lying, to crawling, to standing mimicked a developmental progression which is true but was not my intention in the piece. When I lamented to a university colleague that 'the obvious explanation is that they hated it', he suggested that an alternative explanation might be that they did not possess the language to discuss their reaction. Either lacking the

vocabulary to discuss contemporary dance or unable to transfer their body felt response into words (Stinson, 2004; Barone and Eisner, 2012). An account of showing rehearsal footage of this piece to PhD colleagues at my university and receiving a different (differently experienced) silence is in the 'Reflecting' section later in this chapter.

When I showed the piece at 'Performance and Public Engagement', one researcher was keen for me to write the story of the dance, I refused because the dance is the story (As Acocella (2001:13) reminds us 'Its [dance's] logic is not discursive but lyric'). Assuming, that is, she was meaning story as text, if she meant story as narrative then the dance does not have one. In her introduction to the somatic practice Body-Mind Centering, Bainbridge Cohen (1993) suggests that patterns of movement are an expression of the mind. Perhaps a deeper body literacy may aid this researcher in answering the questions she has about the movement. Another colleague at the York conference felt it was 'challenging' meaning she was having difficulty watching a dance piece that was not 'pretty'.

My paper at the Women and Ageing conference in Limerick, 2015, was called 'An older dancer dancing older lives' and referred to the difficulty of doing embodied work in an ageing body. Especially with having to reduce my dancing and teaching commitment to devote time to write my thesis, I feel my body stiffen and flexibility and mobility ebb away. I feel muscles waste away and I watch videos and see new chins appear. As mentioned below the 'walking like duck' quote, my internal sensation no longer matches the external placement of the body. I write more about the problems with body image in the next chapter. This piece exemplifies the empathising part of my practice and reinforces my belief that any response is valid. The next piece also starts from a post session conversation and responds in a way I was not expecting.

6.2.2 Hold my hand and listen with your skin

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPMgUzGWlRg

(Music: 'This Right Here' Marketa Irglova)

This work developed into an improvised piece I performed for a dance school show held at the Sittingham Church Hall. The piece came from reflecting on comments discussed in *Listening* section 4.4.3 where the dancers shared knowing something of the effort that went into preparing session plans and teaching. The improvisation started with the idea of giving something away and the possibility of rejection. Through the embodied movement exploration, I realised how much we give of ourselves when teaching which led to exploring giving from the body, from the brain and from the heart. Hence the working title of 'Teaching as an act of love'. This connects strongly with the themes already highlighted in previous chapters of the care and trust present in the sessions. It is also an example of the movement leading to new understanding. The previous piece was based on verbatim quotes from conversations, this piece and the following piece were based on a more general sense of a conversation.

6.2.3 Reflection 20141201a.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9nKU2SAymg&index=4&list=PLeBr2PsnRJ QF3SThDfwomA8U4QWjTHnLj

(Music: 'The Bones of You' Elbow)

In one post session conversation, we talked about the power of music to take 'you back' [in time]. One of my favourite songs, "The Bones of You" by Elbow discusses this very phenomenon, so I improvised, recalling moments the song reminds me of, including seeing the song performed live (so the song evokes memories of the song). I have never used music in this way with the dancers as the song that acts as our time machine is personal and the strength of the evocation may vary with time (e.g. certain times of the year may provoke different reactions to hearing the same song).

All of the pieces in this section began with verbal prompts from the dancers. The pieces in the next section were sourced from observing the dancers.

6.3 Watching

6.3.1 Loneliness is a cloak you wear

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lbd9fSGAM2Y

(Music: 'The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore' The Walker Brothers)

All the movements in this piece were created by the dancers at Sittingham. I had created an activity where the dancers improvised on the lyrics of the song 'The sun ain't gonna shine anymore' and reviewed the video of the session to copy their movements. The unobtrusive nature of the camera recording the sessions meant that some of the details of dancers' movements were difficult to make out; several people had their back to the camera and furniture obscured a lot of low level movement. I managed to take something from every dancers' improvisation and created a composite piece. When I showed the piece back to the dancers they recognised their own movements but added self-effacing commentary such as 'but it didn't look as good as when you did it'. Again returning to the theme of not being dancers that was first met in *Listening*. One dancer read the piece as the dancer in the video was lonely because they were pushing people away, another offered the interpretation that the dancer was pushing away loneliness to allow something else in. Additionally the dancers seemed pleased that they were able to support me by providing the raw material for my presentation and took pleasure and pride in it being successful. Another example of the care, trust and interest shown by the members of the group.   The piece was shown at the 'Women, Ageing and Media' conference and summer school in Cheltenham, UK in June 2014 and I presented a paper on using pop lyrics as the basis of creativity with older women. The response to my paper is discussed in the 'Reflection' section of this chapter.

6.3.2 Am I a dancer? I am a dancer.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FPsYV3Qa1s

(Music: 'Take Me Home' Mark Geary.)

As with the previous piece, this was choreographed specifically for presenting at a conference. I chose this piece of music because of the line (and the title) 'Take me home'. At the time of choreographing, I was leading monthly sessions in a nursing home for people with living with advanced dementia. Without fail, someone would ask me to take them home. Although the dance was not about those people, I could not get the idea out of my head once I had had the thought. I emailed the singer/composer, Mark Geary, and asked for his permission to use the music. He said it would be an honour. I countered that maybe he had overestimated my ability as a choreographer, and he replied it was an honour to be asked, no matter what I considered the standard of the output to be. For a moment, I felt part of a wider community of artists and felt very glad.

I created the piece for a performance at the 'International Conference on Cultural Gerontology' in Galway, Ireland in April 2014. It accompanied a paper I presented on how the dancers in the session did not identify themselves as dancers. (Recall in *Listening* section 4.2 'Physical aspects', the dancers talked about doing exercise rather than dancing.) The choreography was a mixture of movements I had seen in sessions from the dancers and my imaginative movement based on their aspirations to be more like graceful ballerinas. I started with the chorus which had four movements I had seen across the groups. The foot movements in the first verse and almost everything else on the chair (including the lying down and the arabesque holding on to the back of the chair) came from watching the dancers. The awkward shy sitting posture, I had seen months or years earlier, when people were new to the group: a mixture of embarrassment, shyness and worried uncertainty. The piece started as an improvisation but had become a set choreography by the time of performance. I showed the final piece to two groups of dancers (the groups where I had got most of the movements from) but was not able to get much feedback beyond "that was lovely", "gave me goose bumps". The previous piece 'Loneliness is a cloak you wear' was made totally of dancers'

choreography, this piece 'Am I a Dancer?' partly used the dancers' choreography. The final piece in this section 'Social Work' did not use any of the dancers' choreography as they had not been giving the creative activity by the time I made the film.

6.3.3 Social work

(Music: 'Blind lead the blind' The Coronas)

This improvisation is me testing out the instruction for the creative activity I was planning to do with the Sittingham dancers so is not strictly a piece that came from observing movement but did, eventually, lead to movement I observed. I had been reading about how women were able to age healthily in comparison with men because they had more social capital. However, most commentators did not acknowledge the work that went into gaining and maintaining social capital: it was something that appeared to be considered natural for women. So I asked the dancers (and myself) to take the actions involved in the work of maintaining our personal social connections and use choreographic devices such as playing with size, temporality, body parts and direction to create a dance. The movement reminded me of how much work we take for granted and would forget to mention if asked verbally but the search for raw movement material with which to be creative requires us to consider everything. I had initially struggled to think of where I work on my social networks (my sense of isolation is discussed in *Reflecting*) but eventually I remembered going to the gym, yoga or dance classes, taking my children to soft play places with other parents, keeping in touch through text messages or social media and cooking to share food with my wider family.

For once, there is no obvious lyrical connection to the movement, I used the song because I enjoyed the driving nature of the drum line at the beginning.

The dance work in the 'Listening' section was based on the talk of the dancers and the work in the 'Watching' section was based on the movement of the

dancers. The final section is work based not on the dancers' experience but on my own experience as a researcher.

6.4 Reflecting

The dance pieces in this final section are in chronological order.

6.4.1 What Will Become

(Music: 'You Will Become' Glen Hansard)

The first presentation of my PhD was at my departmental conference (Research Institute of Health and Social Change in Manchester, UK in July, 2013). The paper I proposed to present was about the difficulties of accessing the community local to the new university building. I have a preference for working out my ideas through movement so in a moment of 'ask for forgiveness not permission' I decided to present a dance film and site specific performance.

The dance film is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1-qHCRTr5Y

Final rehearsal footage of the site specific piece is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Idt4dPqsXxI . When I presented, the audience were inside the room watching the film on the wall located at the left hand of your screen: the glass wall I am dancing behind was on everyone's right hand side. The site specific performance ran simultaneously with the film.

For the film treatment I wrote five acts.

> Act 1: Exploration – the researcher arrives in a place that is completely new to her but at the same time very much part of her

> Act 2: Attention seeking – the researcher attempts to be noticed

> Act 3: Fitting in – the researcher attempts to blend in with the community

Act 4: Conflict – how can you still be noticeable whilst attempting to become part of the surroundings

Act 5: Leaving – this is not her place, it's time to leave

The performance was improvised around physical prompts (for example for Act 2 the dancer needed to make large shapes in space with limbs at full extension in opposite directions). The sites and still images inserted into the film, were chosen to reflect my family's historic connections to the area and the intention was to perform the dance in full at all the locations with a couple of different camera angles and then the edit the material together. The filming schedule was not strictly followed as the younger members of the filming crew (age 2 and 5) got bored, this led to having less material in the edit than was ideal. As a result, Act 4 became a lot shorter than originally imagined and Act 5 came out of an out take but I believe the end result is still true to the original intention.

The soundtrack was chosen after the setting of the treatment but was used during rehearsal along with other music. I was originally looking for a song with references to inside/outside but I did not find anything satisfactory. Instead I turned to a song from my favourite album at the time, 'You Will Become'. I thought I could relate the lyrics, particularly the first line 'In time this won't even matter', to my struggle and eventual growth as a researcher and an arts practitioner.

The site specific choreography was crafted around ideas of insider / outsider.

Act 1 – becoming aware

Act 2 - outsider wants in

Act 3 – reconciled

This time the movement prompts were taken from the environment and the people in and around the space. In the end there was no third act. I did not resolve my insider/outsider status, I just entered the room still different from the others but now sharing a space.

The original intention of the film and choreography was to explore the ideas around insider/outsider and community. In addition, the process raised questions around who is allowed to be a dancer and the strong image of the gate fitted in neatly with issues I was having with reaching participants through gatekeepers. Looking back it also works neatly as a metaphor for feeling outside of mainstream academia or any particular discipline within academia.

I created 'What Will Become' to present and officially share my outsider status with my colleagues at the university. The next piece 'Transfer Report' was created for me, to share with no one in particular.

6.4.2 Transfer report

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9AhccirHVE

(Music: 'This Gift' Glen Hansard)

In December 2013, I had to write my transfer report (from MPhil to PhD) and I found it incredibly difficult. I had just survived through an arduous ethics application and felt very despondent about the progress of the report. To get me through tough moments I would play videos of an outdoor concert I went to in glorious Dublin July sunshine earlier in the year. I played the song used in this video for the closing refrain where the singer, Glen Hansard, repeatedly yells/sings 'don't give up, don't give up'.   As the commentary on the YouTube posting states, I am unhappy about the scrappy nature of the edit but I decided it was better to ship it rough than to keep it perfect, but only existing in my head. The choreography goes through writer's block and feeling an inadequate scholar in comparison to my peers, through feeling trapped by words and defeated by the literature (although my sour face on the book section of the video is mostly down to the frustration of having to do this work with my children acting as support crew). There is a sense of fleeing the confines of the university but then the tango with a lamppost section is a reference to my perceiving the ethics process as difficult and unwilling to accommodate different approaches to research. The final section is a sense of freedom when working

in an embodied way. I also tried to show (but it is difficult for people who are unfamiliar with the performance) how disastrous Hansard's appearance on the Letterman show was on a technical level (amp feedback, guitar strings breaking, dysfunctional microphone) but how artistically it was a triumph and won a standing ovation from the audience. Glen Hansard may have won over his audience, but the next piece 'Successful Ageing' shows I had a rather different relationship with one conference audience.

6.4.3 Successful ageing

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIb0hZUk7kk

(Music: 'Hitchin' a ride' Green Day*)*

This piece was improvised in response to the conference where I showed the video 'Loneliness is a cloak you wear' (discussed in the 'Watching' section). During questions, someone asked me why the piece was seated. 'Because the dancers are seated' I replied. The look on her face was a mix of puzzlement and disgust. This particular conference delegate was only a few years younger than the youngest members of my group and I assume the thought that people less than ten years older than her were incapable of standing for a dance sessions unnerved her slightly. I was dismayed and then annoyed by her response. I sensed that she felt my Sittingham dancers were failures because they were unable to access a standing dance session. Of course, this conference delegate appeared to be coming from a similar viewpoint of successful ageing to Rowe and Kahn (1987, 1997) as already discussed in *Listening*. I thought about did only 'impaired' or 'old' dancers sit down? What I came up with was my impression of a saucy burlesque dance. Again, this revisits the recurring theme of dance versus exercise and raises the question again 'Am I a dancer?'. The choreography also includes elements of the piece I presented at the conference and swimming movements as I was discussing Cohen's 'Art of Waterless Swimming' with another delegate. The music was chosen as it helped me work through and express my angry feelings (DeNora,

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1999). Whereas this piece began from an emotional state of anger, the next piece arose from a different experience of pain: physical pain.

6.4.4 Shoulder pain

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWL7HfCMPmo

(Music: 'The Leading Bird' Marketa Irglova)

This began as a somatic exploration into the pain I was feeling under my shoulder blades and then my hips (as suggested in *Listening* section 4.2.3). The exploration would start with me moving trying to identify the exact area where the pain was and then becomes an exploration of 'is there a way of moving or holding that has an effect on the pain?'

Shoulder pain 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9w3giUJsIvo (Music: 'Colour me in' Damien Rice) then became a more creative exploration of the initial exploration. The movement did not fix the pain but for a moment it did make it liveable with. An interesting outcome of this improvisation was the reaction from a woman who saw me dancing. To the right of the screen is the glass door entrance to the room and outside, is a sofa where people waiting for the class I would lead after my improvising would wait. Normally when I walk out to invite the dancers in, someone will make a comment along the lines of 'I hope you don't think we're going to do that'. On this day, a woman, who had not been to the class before, asked if I was 'showing off'. Interesting that movement with such a strong internal focus might be labelled as 'showing off', I attributed this comment to the (rather prototypical working class northern) notion that art is not work and is self-indulgent. The slightly clumsy comment also reminded me of the nervousness I explored in 'Am I a dancer? I am a dancer' which was discussed in the previous section.

6.4.5 HDV0266

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMLbyLhbS5w

(Music: 'Your love is killing me' Sharon Van Etten)

The most recent piece in this section (chronologically placed a few weeks before 'Body Parts' the first piece in this chapter) returns to the emotional pain of feeling an outsider. This piece is an expression of many of the frustrations detailed in *Reflecting* 'Artist as researcher'. The piece HDV0266 (the automatic file name from my camera – my intense emotional reaction to the day meant that I never felt able to revisit the work and give it a proper title) is my response to a 'bad day at the office'. The previous piece ('Shoulder pain') was an exploration of physical pain, this piece is a somatic exploration of emotional distress. I had just presented the piece on the screen in the background (rehearsal footage of 'Body Parts' as discussed in the 'Listening' section) to some of my PhD colleagues at my university and it had received a very muted reception. This video is me physically working through how I felt at that moment. It is reflective of my tiredness at 'challenging the academy' / working outside 'the normal'

When viewing the piece, the first thing that strikes me is the sadness and lethargy. Just as the music starts, I can hear myself sniff back tears. By the end, I see myself lie on the ground and know that I am sobbing, unable to hold it in any longer. On viewing, I see many movement metaphors:

- shaking off the confines or the heaviness of expectation
- feeling crushed
- reaching - perhaps for a way out or for someone to help me cope with these intense feelings
- Spinning - avoiding being pinned down, throwing people off, revolving around a centre or regaining a centre
- Brushing off - the feelings? The words? The silences?
- Grounding - so often I will come back to attempting to 'ground' myself to have a firm connection with something solid

There are also moments of exhaustion and of frantic activity.

The film showing in the background of HDV_0266 was an early version of 'Body Parts'. A viewer might find it interesting to compare this early version with the final work presented at the beginning of this chapter. The dynamics of the two pieces are very different (the version featured in HDV_0266 was working to a much softer piece of music) but some elements from the earlier version are very obviously still in the final piece.

6.5 End notes

Why might I wish to share my work like this? Conquergood (2007) says the point of performance ethnography is to reach an empathic sharing with an audience. In so much policy work, intellectual knowledge of a situation isn't always enough, we sometimes need a more visceral insight.

The pieces in the listening section obviously began with a verbal prompt, the pieces in the watching section began with either an image seen in the sessions or by one conjured up by talking with the dancer and finally, all the pieces in the reflection section were improvisations starting from a place of discomfort. Some of the pieces (for example Body Parts and HDV_0266) had their music selected almost at random, other pieces such as Transfer Report, had an intentional choice of music.

The dance artist used improvisation as a path to empathic understanding with the dancers and then intended the performance to offer an empathic sharing with an audience. The dances are improvisation but my training in ballet and modern theatre dance are very apparent: the erectness of the spine, the lengthening of the limbs and the use of the floor for standing only. These traditions in my movement do not invalidate the use of somatic movement practice: it is expected that deeply ingrained, habitual movement patterns would be the body's language. Much like the exploratory nature of the research was strongly influenced by the experiences of the researcher.

This chapter started with assertions that the body and embodiment are important and there is no wrong response to the dance work. However, analysis revealed that if an audience attempts to judge the art work with the same criteria it might apply to other writing then they will miss the potential with the artist. Not necessarily wrong but still frustrating for an artist to have work judged to be a failure by standards they do not subscribe to. This reinforced the researcher's experience as an outsider.

This chapter also reiterated the debate over who or which bodies get to be dancers. It also showed care flowing between the dancers in the session and the dance artist by their showing pride in their contribution to the dance works.

This chapter has explored the latter two research aims: (3) Consider some of the thinking underpinning the community dance artist's practice when working with older people and (4) Develop a methodology suitable for capturing the fullness of the experience of working with community arts and health. The person centred process of empathising was highlighted and the validity of any response underpinned the chapter. The theme, which in previous chapters was termed 'dancing versus exercise', resurfaced several times. The final findings chapter offers another internal witness standpoint but this time of the research process in a quest to answer research aim (4) more fully.

Chapter 7 - Reflecting

Listening and *Watching* were concerned with discovering more about the sessions through conversations and observation. *Dancing* considered an embodied way of thinking about the sessions and also partly examined the experience of researching. This chapter is about the experience of working as an interdisciplinary researcher, using embodied and arts based methods, in a traditional academic environment. Using methods inspired by institutional ethnography and practice as research methodologies, this is a reflexive chapter that uses performance and performative writing.

Whilst the PhD is supposed to be the pinnacle of intellectual achievement, this chapter is about my embodied experience of being a researcher, it is a sensuous autoethnograpy of the process of learning both to research and how to navigate academia. Pelias suggests that such an ethnography requires an embodied presentation (Pelias, 2008). However, that is difficult to share here so I will instead employ performative writing (Pollock, 1998). Carver (2007) responds to Pelias's (2004) autoethnographic/performative text and recognises 'a methodology that embraces the reality of our performing bodies as we conduct our research and as we express what we have learned.' (Carver, 2007:5). This is how I chose to frame the writing here.

The aim of this chapter is to attempt to cast a light on how the research and thesis were shaped by the university in which they were created. Kamler and Thomson (2014) suggest that, historically, the act of situating the researcher firmly in a research text was an act that had the potential to challenge existing power structures. I believe it is important to include this chapter so that it is acknowledged that the journey to a PhD is a difficult one.

I have chosen to break the following text into three sections to reflect three roles that have given me difficulty during research: mother, artist and writer. The data in this section mainly comes from my journaling through the research period and my reflections on that writing. I have been keeping journals for

many years (inspired in part by Rainer, 1980) but the journaling during my PhD was a deliberate attempt to record the decisions made and so the journey towards becoming a researcher. None of the journals were stored electronically: the majority were typed / word processed but I did not save the documents as early in the process I was nervous about confidentiality for my participants and began deleting the files after printing them out. The writing here is neatly divided into three sections but the division of the roles was a lot less tidy: I was always mum, artist, writer and researcher (and more) all the time (Powell, 1999). The journals were used to fill in this framework with data and reflections. Entries from my journals are inserted in italics throughout the chapter.

"The personal is political" is a famous feminist slogan from the second wave of feminism (Hanisch, 2000). The premise being that the women's liberation movement needed to bring awareness to the previously hidden lives of women in the domestic sphere to enable political change to improve women's lives (Gavison, 1992). Edwards and Ribbens (1998) make a further distinction between public and private (generally referring to family and domestic experience) and personal (the experience of self). This chapter is all 'personal' (but is not necessarily all of the 'personal') and generally contains accounts of where there was a conflict between public and private or public and personal.

7.1 Mother as researcher

Being a woman in my thirties with childcare responsibilities is not very unusual but it has caused many difficulties in my research.

March 2015

My daughters are watching TV in the front room. I, as always, am sat at my desk in the kitchen. My six year old rushes in "muuuuum, if you study online you can spend more time with your children". A pair of big blue eyes look at me, waiting to be told "what a brilliant idea, clever thinking, I'll sign up now and then we can go to park". Instead, I sigh. The blue eyes turn to disappointment and rush back into the living room before the cartoons start again. My eyes turn back to the laptop screen. I am writing a proposal for a conference on creativity and mothering. I was writing about how my work as a community artist mirrors

the skills needed for mothering but instead I think I need to write about how my work steals the skills needed for mothering and reduces my ability to be an effective parent.

I wonder if anyone writes about using up your caring abilities. I probe Google for clues and am directed towards the literature on burnout. I was fascinated to see that burnout was a concept related to employment. But I did not have burnout in relation to my job, just possibly in my home life, my unpaid care work. I find papers on burnout for mothers with poorly (Norberg, 2007) or disabled children (Bilgin and Gozum, 2009), but nothing about ordinary mothers doing everyday things and ending up with burnout. Dickson-Swift et al. (2007) briefly mentions burnout for qualitative researchers but they are discussing researching harrowing topics, whilst not wishing to sound dismissive of the generous nature of the sharing of the stories, the conversations that were a part of this research would not be labelled harrowing. When I review my journal, I see evidence that listening is a key skill for my artistic practice. Barndt (2008) goes as far to suggest that this skill developed through arts practice is what makes the arts valuable to qualitative research. But through my journaling it becomes obvious that listening is a skill that is used infrequently at home.

June 2014

Twice in the last two days I've notice my reserves of kindness/patience dry up. Yesterday I used them up comforting a tired Evie so when I then had to deal with a tired Sophie I had no patience left. Today, I was more short with the juniors after being tolerant of the tired/hungover seniors [at a private dance school].

For example, in October 2013, I note the contrast between my patient response to a dancer with dementia and my then two year old daughter. Both were displaying disruptive, defiant behaviour but one received a compassionate, caring response (my professional response), the other drew anger. Modern society likes to portray the myth of the mother being a person blessed with endless patience (how many commercials play on the theme of 'mother cleans

floor, immediately followed by person or animal walking across newly clean floor with muddy feet'?) but I think it is actually a finite resource than can be subject to burning out.

Burnout is a psychological emotional state made up of emotional exhaustion (unable to cope with emotional demands of the people around us), a lack of empathy and lack of belief in own ability to fulfil the particular role (Maslach et al., 2001). Much of the academic literature on burnout relates to the caring professions (Hamann & Gordon, 2000).   The symptoms of burnout are suggested by some of the writing in my journal and my recollections of the period. Hamann and Gordon (2000) suggest relieving the symptoms of burnout through changing the job role or responsibilities, taking a break or taking up a relaxing whole body based practice such as yoga. Taking a holiday from work is tempting but not really an option for someone struggling with their parenting role. Alarcon et al. (2011) propose that burnout can be mediated through personal resources and coping styles. The individual nature of the path out of burnout is troubling. It appears to let the institutions involved off the hook of dealing with their contribution to burnout.

August 2014

At the end of my second year of my PhD, my department moved to a new building and our library was consolidated with the main university. During the summer vacation (and school holidays) I wanted to take a book back and collect a reserved book. I had my children with me. At the previous site, if I wanted to take my children into the library I had to fill in forms confirming that I knew the building was a dangerous place for children. At the main library building I wanted to avoid that fuss and tried to reassure the man behind the desk that all we were going to do was pick up a book and go to the toilet. "Children have to stay in the foyer" he said. "So we can't go to the toilet?" I asked, incredulous. "No, that's on the first floor. The children have to stay in the foyer. There are toilets next door in the business school." My children are six and three years old. If I wanted to go and get a book off a shelf I was expected to leave them on their own whilst I disappeared to another part of the building. Does the rule apply to small babies too? Would it be more or less distracting for other students to have abandoned children crying in the foyer or to let them stay close to their parent throughout the building? I imagine the idea is to stop parents without adequate childcare from studying all day in the library with bored offspring in tow but it seems a little over reaching. And what about that

inadequate childcare? A university as a force for social equality or even social good would provide some kind of childcare support, a neoliberal university run as a slick business probably is not going to risk diversifying into also becoming a childcare provider. I wonder how disruptive children in a library would be. This is a building, after all, that is filled with people in their late teens and early twenties; hardly the city's quietest demographic. The university, or at least the web copy writer, seems quite proud of the statistic 40% of students are mature students [when I go back to the university website to search for the basis of this figure I discover it has been revised down twice since I originally wrote this]. *I am guessing I am not the only student who would be impacted by this rule and that it will impact more women than men.*

Reay (2003) notes the contrast between the experience of mature students who are mothers with the more normative expected experience of younger, independent students. Reay describes the women in her study being unable to 'totally immerse themselves' (Reay (2003:310) in student work until all domestic work, including childcare, was finished. She notes the women felt overwhelmed by attempting to meet the competing demands.

May 2015

I am walking through a London university looking for a seminar. I have already noticed on the campus map I am clinging to as I frantically search for the correct room, that the building I need is next to the university nursery. My university does not have a nursery. As I walk up the stairs to my seminar, I notice a poster offering support with childcare fees for students. I have never seen such a poster at my university. At my graduation, my (by then) five year old daughter will not be permitted to watch me graduate. The university 'explains' it as graduation ceremonies are boring, small children will not be able to sit still through it (I am paraphrasing) and we do not want to ruin the (boring) ceremony for other people. Obviously no one gives a shit about ruining the ceremony for me, but who cares, I am just a mother who has had to sacrifice her relationship with her children to get this degree.

Van Anders (2004) found that more female graduate students than male were considering NOT pursuing a career in academia because they considered the role incompatible with parenting, despite there being no gender difference in the rates of graduate students wanting to start a family. The pipeline is still leaking. In the academic year 2013/14, academic staff in the UK were 44.6%

female, however only 22.4% of staff working at a professorial level were female (HESA, 2014).

March 2015

As soon as I have submitted the proposal for this conference on mothering and creativity, I have to stop writing to make a costume for my daughter's school book day. No doubt wanting to make a costume, rather than telling her to get something out of the dressing up box, came from guilt over neglect due to working on my PhD, which then, of course, will lead to guilt over neglecting my writing to spend time making a dressing up dress.

Stone and O'Shea (2013) note the gendered nature of time in work/life balance in interviews with Australian mature students. Women are more likely to spend their time away from their studies meeting other people's needs, particularly their children.

March 2015

The creativity in motherhood that is not recognised, noticed or valued by anyone other than small children, if at all. Then I felt more guilt this morning as I dropped her [daughter in book day princess outfit] off at nursery and another little girl was really upset because she was the only one not dressed as a princess (she was a bunny, maybe Little Rabbit Fou Fou?). I am supposed to be a feminist orientated researcher, why am I sending my daughter in to school wearing a costume that reflects oppressive hetronormative roles. In the end, my daughter didn't like her costume. All the other girls in her class went as the other princess in the film. My older daughter attempted to encourage her by saying how she likes being different to the others but at age four, fitting in seems to be her primary aim. Learning to build communities starts at an early age. Whilst the four year old wants to fit in, the six year old is happier being a fringe player, attracting attention because she sticks out. Looks like they both take after their mum.

The distress of my not fitting in was first met in *Dancing* where I shared my upset at being an outsider in 'HDV_0266', just like my younger daughter. However, since you are reading a thesis that contains links to improvisational dance rather than an RCT, it is possibly fair to say I embraced that outsider-ness, just as my older daughter would.

As mentioned in *Watching*, being a mum gave me a point of connection with the dancers. I could regale them with tales of my daughters' sleeping, illness or cute sayings. My stories were points for us to link together as a community in solidarity (Clark, 1992). They were often springboards for others to add their own stories. Occasionally, I brought one or both of my children along when illness struck either the girls or the childminder so my children were more than just stories for the dancers.

Additionally, mothering was a point of connection in my academic life. In my supervision team, I am surrounded by mothers at different stages of their academic career. It gives me hope and confidence that maybe there is a place for someone like me in the academy. Outside of our cosy group, however, I have sense that scheduling meetings around the school run and cancelling meetings at the last minute because of chickenpox is less acceptable. Warner (2015) notes that many women tolerate less than ideal working conditions because, after the generations that went before us fought so hard to be accepted by the academy, we are grateful to just be here.

How has being a mother affected my reading of the data? I think I was slow to pick up on the relevance of family in the conversations and the observations. Family is my normal so it did not occur to me it was noteworthy until a reader of an early version of the thesis pointed it out.

November 2014

At the end of the [dance] *session, three regulars came to me and told me that they weren't coming next week as they had an Xmas do to go to (I'm assuming with another group they attend). On the way home, I was thinking that I should join some group before Xmas so I can get to go on a social with them because it might be a long time until they would go out together as a group again. I then realised I had no idea how you go from being on nodding terms with a fellow member of a group to going out or a coffee or beer or inviting them around for dinner. I wondered if they* [the dancers] *became friends at a group or if they knew each other beforehand. A mile or so later I realised I was a little bit jealous of their friendship group and their social lives. I wondered if that was the real reason I started this research, I had noticed people becoming friends in a group and wondered how they did it. I thought maybe I should write my thesis in two parts, one where I write an official academic version of why I did this*

research (loneliness policy and NHS strain etc etc) and then where I write about my own loneliness, isolation and lack of social skills. Not for the first time this week I mourned a little for the loss of my best friend.

I find myself envying their lives because they have people to chat to on the phone, go out shopping with, even go on holiday with. My life feels so small. The isolation of staying at home with small children followed by the isolation of PhD research (Hockey, 1994) is crushing. Whilst I am evidently not the first PhD candidate to struggle with doctoral research (see for example Acker & Haque, 2015), I still feel alone with my difficulties.

Stanley suggests that the process of getting lost is inevitable for the novice researcher (Stanley, 2015). Stanley writes about the embodied and emotional nature of doing PhD work. She acknowledges that completing a PhD might be easier for her because she has no family commitments and is relatively financially secure. She does wonder, however, if it might be better for her self-care if she did have those family commitments, occasionally tugging her away from her computer screen to focus on something other than her work. My PhD experience suggests that might not be the straight forward case, my journal entries are filled with despair at having to do this work and the care work involved in family life.

Twigg (2004) notes the gendered nature of care work and that society believes that caring comes naturally to women (and those women who are not given to caring are considered abnormal). This gives rise to the patriarchal view that care is both priceless and not worth paying for. Paid care work is done by the people on the lowest rungs of the employment ladder, the people who do not possess the requisite social status to avoid such work.

Tronto (2001) also notes the gendering of care and suggests that devaluing of care is partly due to care being part of our private lives. Our dependency on care and caring relationships as a species disrupts the Western philosophical notion of humans as independent actors. This modernist conception of a person values rationality and logical rule following as the basis of decision

making (Parton, 2003). Tronto (2001) notes that care often results in conflict. Tronto gives examples how conflict might arise in a care relationship at a personal level, an institutional level and a political level (Tronto, 2001). In my writing, we can observe the conflicts at all level: on a personal level when my needs to work conflicted with my family's needs for care, at an institutional level where my caring responsibilities as a professional appeared to conflict with my at home caring responsibilities and at a political level where the university did not appear to have a space for the concerns of students with a parenting role could be considered. As this chapter considers how the environment it was created in shaped the eventual research, a question of what aspects of arts and health provision are deemed worthy of investigation in other similar institutions.

7.2 Artist as researcher

The unique part of my research is my situatedness as an expert by practice in the field of community dance / arts and health; if I was not a dance practitioner then I would not have a research project. However, being a dancer first and a researcher second has had an interesting impact on my progress.

So much about my PhD experience felt like I was not supposed to be here (at this university), acting in this way (dancing, and dancing as though dancing is important). I kept coming back to this improvisation

Me, in a cupboard.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7U3Soijzr0E
Short link http://bit.ly/1gPMsDW
(Music: 'Philanderer' Glen Hansard)

In June 2013, we gained a new PhD office. At the back of the room was a small walk in cupboard. When I first saw it I thought it would be perfect for a spot of choreography but it was locked soon after we moved in and remained

so until the week before we left the building for our new campus. I had my chance and I took it.

For this video, I did a single take. I knew I wanted the camera angle to cut off the head (as though we are getting a glimpse of something we are not supposed to be seeing) but I had not thought through the choreography. The music choice (Glen Hansard – the same artist I used for my first presentation) was a piece that I had imagined choreographing to in a small space (e.g. a lift or stairwell) with camera work to suggest a security camera-like view. The choreography process was simply to put the music and move in the space, using the properties of the space. The cupboard was just a bit too wide for me, and I am just a bit too weak, to brace myself fully across it.

When I first saw the film, I knew I loved the camera angle, I just was not sure if I was loving the quirkiness of the angle or being able to watch the dancing without seeing my face (perhaps without my face I could momentarily forget it was me and watch less critically, just as I would other dancers). I thought it was a lovely metaphor for the embodied researcher, using the body without overthinking or using the head too much. (Spry (2001) and Conquergood (1991) use the term 'embodied researcher' to mean a researcher that does not attempt to remove the sensuous nature of research from a text.)

I shared the video on social media and some friends imagined it to be a night in police cells. It is possible that that was the only reading they could make of such a small space or maybe they also saw something about confinement or trapped-ness. Other comments got me thinking about the back story to the film. Why is she dancing in a cupboard? Who is she? What is she doing? What about switching the light off? I assume she has a 'proper' job in an office and she has to sneak off to do her dancing in between her real work (the cupboard as a liminal space). Now there was an interesting metaphor for my research.

September 2013

I'm getting quite fed up with my position as the weirdo outsider who's not doing proper research. I'm fed up of being passed over in conversation because I'm not agreeing whole heartedly with them [other PhD researchers]. I'm so angry I can feel tears burning in the back of my eyes. … Is it right to want to avoid confrontation? I need to be able to defend my ideas but I don't need to go into battle on a daily basis.

Twenty years ago, Jane Desmond wrote 'Dance remains a greatly undervalued and undertheorized arena of bodily discourse. Its practice and its scholarship are, with rare exception, marginalized within the academy.' (Desmond, 1993-4:34). In my little corner of academia, it appears that little has changed in the intervening time.

Jackson writes:

> "… our narratives of self depend on the interpretative devices and discourses culturally available to us." (Jackson, 1998:49).

Had I had different experiences with the arts during my lifetime perhaps Chapter 6 could have been presented as a series of paintings or poems or play scripts. However, the interpretative devices I am most comfortable and conversant with are movement and the body so that is what I use to extend the thinking on this research.

As already described in *Dancing* section 6.4.1 'What will become', for my first conference as a PhD researcher, I turned up at the departmental conference, with not one but two performances to put in my twenty minute slot, alongside a formal presentation. I was crafting an identity as a researcher that dances: an artist/researcher perhaps? Possibly but as already described I felt an unease that this work was not considered real scholarship. I would describe what I was hoping to achieve and see raised eyebrows and hear mutters of 'oh, is that what you're doing?' and the doubts chipped away at my fragile new identity.

Leavy (2009) asserts that the traditional methods of assessing rigour in more positivist orientated work are not suitable for assessing arts based research. She instead proposes that the value of arts based research can be found in 'resonance, understanding, multiple meanings, dimensionality and collaboration'

(Leavy, 2009:16). It is unfair of colleagues to look at my work and seek reassurances to the rigorous nature of the research by looking for 'objectivity, neutrality, reliability, replication, and validity' (Davies and Dodd, 2002: 280). It may be easier for qualitative researchers to note values of, say, '*attentiveness*, *empathy*, … *sensitivity*, … *honesty*, … *openness*' (Davies and Dodd, 2002: 288) but it would still take effort and flexibility on their part (Leavy, 2009). Is it fair of me to expect that much from my colleagues?

Janesick (2008) notes that both the arts and research seek to retell narratives with empathy and understanding. Arts and research intend to do the same work but art has the capacity to reach a wider audience. Why would anyone in the academy want to challenge that?

Leavy (2011) describes researchers having a fear of transdisciplinarity as their identity is created in reference to their discipline. Leavy appears to offer comfort to potentially distressed researchers: they do not have to turn their back on their home discipline, instead they can root themselves firmly in one discipline so that they might grow and stretch into other disciplines. I note in my journal that since my home discipline is community arts and we are naturally inclined to beg, borrow and steal from anywhere and everywhere, transdisciplinarity does not hold any fear for me. I think that the main problem with being an interdisciplinary researcher is that the university does not subscribe to the relevant journals for my little niche. Or maybe the real problem is that I see no jobs for a researcher who nestles between several disciplines but does not sit comfortably in any of them.

Within the first few months of my PhD, I attended a networking day for arts and health researchers. I had not yet realised that most arts and health researchers were not practitioners. It felt very odd to be discussing practice with people who would not be doing the practice. Looking back at my notes of that day I do not see anything that suggests displeasure, I seem to recall being very happy to finally belong somewhere. I remember now a powerful conversation with Sheelagh Broderick, during a tea break, imploring me to

make time for my own practice in my PhD. This was the planting of the seed that became the embodied nature of this thesis.

The second time we met, a few months later, this group of arts and health researchers discussed who they should be networking with. They thought of NHS health trusts, research councils and other useful people. About fifth on the list someone added artists. I tried to remain professionally dispassionate but ended up becoming quite cross in front of one of the UK's senior arts and health researcher. In the arts and health research hierarchy, research comes first, then health and the arts trail in last. How can artists expect society and funders to respect them and their work when the people who are supposed to be gathering the very tools that will help arts and health gain visibility and validity only add in the arts as an afterthought?

September 2013

I feel so low … I spent the day at my second ERSC seminar for Arts Health researchers and I'm further reminded how unlike them I am. I am definitely an artist rather than a researcher but then when I'm with artists I feel that I don't have enough experience to be called an artist. I don't talk like them [researchers] and I don't think I ever will.

Where does this leave my identity as a researcher? Well, I know I am not one of them (the arts and health researchers) perhaps I am an arts and health practitioner….

February 2015

I have spent three years hanging out with arts and health professionals at various networking events and conferences and I hear the same things I heard when I first started this journey.

"There's no money."

"We just need to show the funding bodies proof that what we do works. When we have the research and the stats they want to hear then we can access proper funding."

No we will not. We will never have enough proof for 'them'. Arts and health already has a huge wealth of research but it is not enough. Why do we think more will be better? Community artists are not interested in the benefits that they espouse; the economic arguments are not important to us (otherwise we would all be bankers not artists) so why do we insist on trying to play their game? We do not want to play their game so why do we let them tell us what hoops we have to jump through? Sure they have money but it is not the only money in the world. And we have something that they need.

I start to rant on this and I see people's eyes glaze over. I shut up and they change the subject. One woman at this last networking day in February 2015, tells me I should use affirmative inquiry (she is really quite dull-ly insistent about this), I should look for the positive in the most difficult situation. Negativity does not get us anywhere. Well, I think, that is not entirely true. Negativity gets us angry and that can be an impetus for inspiring change. Peters (2012) suggests that insisting that people avoid anger usually comes from a position of privilege or relative power. Indeed, Peters quotes Gandhi '…anger controlled can be transmitted into a power that can move the world.' (Peters, 2012: 240). Anger was also the starting point for the piece 'Ageing successfully' in the previous chapter, hence anger can be transformed into action.

Another person at the network day said I was good at 'seeing the other side'. We had just watched a performance piece an artist created with the artist's dad who is living with dementia. I said it made me feel uncomfortable because I was guessing it was supposed to be about their relationship and it felt a little like she was using him as a prop in the artwork. I do not think I am particularly good at seeing the other side generally. I am, however, very accustomed to attempting to look at how it might be to be an older person in a system like a care home or a hospital. Sometimes I am guilty of discounting the power of older people to resist in these situations (Grenier and Hanley, 2011).

At the same event, another artist used the phrase 'it is not in my head' (in reference to a phrase that might be used by a patient that felt medical staff did not believe they were truly ill). Considering the fight I think I am having to take a reader/examiner from this head/text based examination of the research to a

more embodied one, it seems funny that our colloquialisms place fact as what can be bodily felt rather than mentally imagined.

Despite the reality for most dancers (Shah et al. (2012) found 82% of dancers in their survey had suffered at least one injury in the previous twelve months) I have never suffered serious injury from my dancing. I assume part of the reason is that I have not been dancing since the age of 3 (I started when I was 18 and then maybe a class or two a month) so my joints have not suffered the cumulative damage of years in abnormal positions, plus I studied ballet when I had the physical strength to hold positions correctly and did not develop maladaptive stress on the body (trying to use the wrong muscles to hold the positions). So when I do feel pain from dancing it still comes as a shock. When developing the piece 'Body Parts' (introduced in *Dancing*), I was working with images of physical difficulties and limitations the dancers had discussed during interviews. I was seeking to embody the interview data. Conquergood discusses how the embodied nature of ethnography leads to an 'intensely sensuous way of knowing' (Conquergood, 1991:180). During the research period, one dancer limped out of a session saying "Don't worry, I limped in too". When I tried to embody this I realised I did not know how to limp which lead to the (now embarrassingly obvious) conclusion that I could put these limitations on my own body but that tells me nothing about the experience of living with those limitations. I am sure I have had injuries that have caused me to limp, I was even on crutches for a few weeks but I appear to have no muscle memory of how to limp. Like Albright, I was just trying to get a sense of their 'experience from the inside out' (Albright, 2010a:102). But if I have forgotten the embodied experience of pain I have had, is it fair to expect my body to be able

to offer insights on the experience of pain I know nothing about? In the final rehearsal for the piece, I sat on the floor and realised I had a pain in my left gluteal. Which then became a pain in my back and thigh. I could now remember how to limp all right. Had I torn something? Was it a sciatic pain? I could then feel it in my foot. Not sciatica then. Either a fascia injury or referred pain. I cursed myself for getting old and trying to fling myself around the studio like I was still 22. I remembered the previous week when I gave myself three days of neck ache after whipping my head around without sufficient warm up. Maybe it was not age at all but a lack of a proper warm up. Or not even dancing, I had just attempted to sprint my unfit, larger than it used to be body 800m back to my car when I realised I had left my handbag on the front seat (a senior moment?). I still have not discovered why I am not supposed to be able to be as physically literate just because I have had a few more birthdays. I was once told that as cells age they stiffen and this is what causes 'normal' ageing in the body (see Dugdale, 2013) But Bowman (2015) discusses research on human movement and capability and compares it to the study of animals but only looking at animals in captivity and disregarding the conditions of the environment on the animal's behaviour. Humans are so far removed from the conditions we evolved to function in, our benchmark of 'normal' could be way off.

February 2015

At Sittingham we start kicking our legs in time to the music. I slow the speed down by half, it's hurting my knees to go at that speed. One dancer asks 'What is the matter with your knees?' "Old age" I reply, 'You're in the wrong company for saying things like that' she retorts.

Early in the research process, preparing for that first departmental conference, I caught myself thinking I would rather be watching someone young and mobile dance than me. It seemed I too had succumbed to the societal belief that dancers are supposed to be young, fit and skinny (Albright, 1997). But I was a community dance artist, I worked with older people, some of whom struggled to dance without a chair to support them, I was supposed to be leading the

fight against this sort of attitude, not propagating it through wishing for a dance company to save me (and the rest of the world) from having to watch a body like mine perform my choreography.   In September 2013 I filmed a series of dance improvisations where I wore just a crop top and some short shorts. I called them 'fat dancing feminist' (and can be found at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeBr2PsnRJQGxK7OHDR8wQH6Yps9 G3Aeq short link http://bit.ly/1GA5kLU   I watched the footage back and was shocked to see a flabby, post-baby belly bouncing around. Even though Dempster (2010) reminds me, that thanks to Yvonne Rainer and her colleagues at the Judson Dance Theatre, I have the perfect body for post-modern dance (i.e. any body), the social conditioning of the male gaze (Albright, 2010b) is hard to shake. I shared the videos on social media and was shocked again. This time by the reaction of my friends. Not one of them was horrified, some even went as far to say they thought it was beautiful and all they saw was woman confident in her own skin. I rationalised this two ways. Firstly, I have collected a group of friends, both online and in real life, who are body positive feminists; their politics and beliefs are about celebrating, rather than shaming, women's bodies, whatever their size. Secondly, a lot of my friends had nothing to say; if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all, I thought. Still, I worried about people being able to see my body. And then I worried about being a bad feminist for worrying about people seeing my body, much like Longhurst (2012). But as Roxanne Gay put it so well in her beautiful essay and TED talk 'I would rather be a bad feminist than no feminist at all.' (Gay, 2012, 95).

Tomko (1996) describes how dance in New York City in the early 20th century was used to challenge gender norms by allowing women and girls to take up space, be physically active and to be seen as active agents outside of a private, domestic setting. The classes and my videos could be seen as a similar phenomenon: using dance to access spaces and ways of being that are not typically expected of older and/or larger women.

I also had an internal debate of quality of the dance work. Maybe it was not just the body I was finding offensive, perhaps the dancing was not worth watching. At my final conference presentation of the PhD, I showed three videos of my dancing (in lieu of a PowerPoint). Someone said I was 'very brave' to put myself on display like that, I shot back that maybe it was just self-indulgent. Was I being defensive or self-effacing? There is a debate on the quality of the art work in the performative research literature. For Piirto (2002), you must have at least a degree level education in the art form you wish to employ. But Leavy with her handbooks (2009) and how-to manual (2013), suggests that all you need is a story, a structure and a willing to try and to learn. Elsewhere, Leavy (2009) considers it unfair to hold arts based research to the same standard of aesthetics that we might hold other works of art to.

July 2014

I am wandering around Wickes (a DIY store/builder's merchant), the strong smell of sweat from one of the staff hits me and suddenly the unfinished walls and ceilings and concrete floors remind me of the new spaces at university. I hear myself thinking 'is the new building a male building?' I am not sure that that even means anything but it stirs up feelings of being excluded and not quite fitting in. I think a better word might be 'masculine' space. I challenge myself, what is a feminine space then? What did the old building have that the new building lacks?

The new buildings are efficient and designed to be purposeful. The old buildings, in their organic, patchwork way (they were old buildings that had various extensions built through the years), had lots of unexpected and possibly useless but maybe with great potential, dead-ends and niches. In the new building, you are encouraged to get to where you need to be as quickly as possible, in the old building, you had no choice but to linger because there was only the long way around. Spain (2000) compares the open plan office to a Panopticon; a building where inmates could be observed at any time so self-regulate their behaviour to that which is fit to be observed even when it goes unobserved. There is definitely something about all that sleek metal and glass of the new buildings, I wondered if it had more to do with the lack of frames,

the lack of ability to open them, the lack of control over my immediate environment. In my journal reflections, I lament missing the 'organic, liminal spaces' at the old buildings, having previously studied at a Russell group university, perhaps university buildings need grassy quadrants for authenticity. Then I need to wonder about the gender of the spaces where I facilitate dance the old gentle cosy church hall space and the big new sports centre

December 2014

One of the dancers was complaining about the parking in front of the centre today. The cars had been parked so that another car would not be able to fit in. A driver was sat in one vehicle and the dancer asked he husband (who was driving their car) if she should ask him to move up a bit so he could fit in. He said no. She said, if I'd been on my own I'd have asked him, blokes don't like to bother. They don't think [about other people]. I wondered about this masculine use of space again. Do men not have to consider other people fitting into public space around them?

Hesse-Biber et al. (2006) suggest there is a social aspect to eating disorders in women: society requires women to control their appetites so as to remain slim and feminine, thus limiting the amount of public space a woman might take up.

A troublesome female with her disruptive feminine (artistic, mothering) ways in a male space; that is how it feels to do this research.

I went to a seminar launching our departments new research centre for well-being. Our head of faculty and acting dean, introduced the new building saying how it was intended to be a community resource. She said 'only yesterday we had a community event with an art exhibition and dancing. I hasten to add I didn't take part in the dancing'. At the time I was more concerned that there was dancing happening in the building and I did not know about it. But later that day, I found myself wondering what it meant that the head of faculty wanted to immediately distance herself from my arts practice and methodology. What might my thesis look like if I was in a department where the acting dean vigorously endorsed dancing and embraced embodiment? A few months

earlier, at the beginning of my final year, I took part in an ESRC Festival of Science event at the same building. I delivered a creative dance session as part of an afternoon exploring the benefits of the arts to well-being. I was promoting dance, on behalf the university, in our building and at an official event but it was on a Saturday and the academics in attendance were good friends and strong allies. No one who might be challenged by this thinking (and moving) was around. I had come full circle but I am still on the wrong side of the glass wall.

July 2014

I was super challenged by some of the presentations on the final day [of a gerontology conference]*. The final presentation got me quite flustered. The speaker was discussing a large arts and health research project she's co-organised. If you're a social scientist and you think that the arts might hold the answer to a problem you're struggling with (e.g. how to improve/maintain good mental health for older people) perhaps you could consider being a little less rude about artists, no, they might not fit into your model of how a researcher works but remember, they can do the work that you can't. And whilst we're on about models, if your psychology model hasn't managed to fix the problem that the art has been dealing with quite well up until now thank you very much (I'm still angry, can you tell?) don't complain that the artist doesn't fit well into your (capitalist) model, perhaps consider looking at a model the artist uses - remember, they're the ones getting the results that you're desperate to get too. It was similar to the earlier dementia presentation, the speaker there was talking to 'us' about 'them' (people with dementia). Why would she assume that no one in the audience was living with dementia? Why would the final presenter assume 'we' all thought so little of artists too?*

And so we return to where we started this section: artists kowtowing. Although this time, instead of going cap in hand to the money men, artists are supposed to be grateful for academics (like me?) coming poking holes in our work.

May 2013

[On struggling with writing] *I've got full on imposter syndrome today. Looked at the dance department at uni and I really don't fit in there. I'm not really a dancer. Shit. I hated writing that, but that's what my research is about. The title dancer isn't just for conservatoire trained artists, we're all dancers. But where is that in the literature?*

In *Why I Write*, George Orwell says "Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout with some painful illness." (Orwell, 1946 quoted in Popova, 2012). Sitting still is enough of a struggle for someone whose first instinct is to move to think. It is doubly difficult to write or concentrate on dense texts after a night 'sleeping' on the floor next to a poorly child. The struggle to write as a dancer (and a mother) was with me the entire way through my PhD journey.

7.3 Researcher as writer

Much of the latter parts of my journaling are around my feelings. (Earlier sections where more practice focused, exploring questions around delivering dance sessions and doing research). Many of the entries begin with me expressing a difficulty in writing and then trying to write my way out of that difficulty.

March 2015

Everyday having to battle these demons just so I can sit and face the keyboard. Not even to battle so I can write... There's another fight to be had before the words appear. Just got to keep fighting so I don't click off the screen and passively consume the internet.

Richardson describes '*writing as a method of inquiry*' (Richardson and Adams St Pierre, 2005:960). She goes on to describe a process of creative writing that has an awareness of being shaped, not just by the subject, but by the author and the choices made in writing

> an ethnographer learns about the topic and about themselves that which was unknowable and unimaginable using conventional analytical procedures, metaphors, and writing formats. (Richardson and Adams St Pierre, 2005:962-3)

Pelias (2004) describes writing as having to come from the heart to have any meaning. I feel academia is still suspicious of anything too personal, lest it not be serious scholarship. I do not write like a journal article in *Nature* or *BMJ*. I

write like the autoethnographic accounts in *Qualitative Inquiry (QIX)* but the focus of my research is not myself. I struggle to write. My journal is full of metaphors of writing as drowning, trudging and heaviness, dragging me down.

March 2015

I read something from QIX hoping it will tell me something [about a presentation I am preparing]. It doesn't but it taunts me that I'm not writing. I should be writing. That's the only way out of this hole.

I've drunk alcohol, I've eaten sugary food and still there's this hole inside that says 'you can't do this'. I need to hear someone say they believe I can but there is just silence. And the tapping of keys. Maybe the keys believe I can. You can do this. …

Why do I want to write like this? Because trying to write any other way is deception.

Whilst my journal contains many entries that reveal the difficulties of producing any type of writing, when writing from the heart (or the pits of despair) the words spill relatively easily onto the page. But writing that is meant to be seen, to be judged, and, unfailingly, judged as inadequate, that writing is much harder to encourage onto the page. So what is my solution: change academia so that delicate flowers like myself are never judged on their writing? The judgement is not the problem. Instead I struggle against what I perceive to be a narrow range of acceptable writing.

I am not sure if I am kicking against a narrow range of acceptable writing or against having to change the way I write. I feel like a petulant child when I complain. Even now, this writing feels like it is going around in circles. Oh Laurel, where is the clarity of thought that is supposed to come with writing about this?

Conquergood (2002:147) states that the 'scriptocentrism' ways of the academy need to be challenged. Maybe writing conventions exist to prove that you are time served enough to make a worthy contribution but to my ears, that is an

argument that can be used to shut down 'other' voices, voices from outside male, white middle class norms. Perhaps this is a question about scientific rigour and validity of research. What makes this account more valid if it is written within the conventions of academia? I am writing about personal experiences of a setting. These experiences are important to researchers because they impact on well researched but contested situations.

I kick against it but I am just one student in a precarious work situation. I have no financial security, if I want to have hope of a job (not even an actual job, just the hope of one), then it is suggested, by several sources, that I play by the rules.

September 2014

Being a feminist researcher is hard because not only do I have to do the research but I have to live it as well. The undervaluing of unpaid care labour is not an abstract concept but my daily reality. … What am I supposed to do now? I guess the private is political and the revolution might as well start at home. I need to address the issue in my home, I need to decide what I deem acceptable… and find the words to make this happen. That's my struggle in attempting to become a writer, find the words never comes easily or quickly….

The struggle of writing has already been discussed. However, my journal also acknowledges the difficulties of collecting and reviewing data through a critical feminist lens and then experiencing an inequitable distribution of unpaid care labour.

The research and subsequent writing took place at a time of intense global turmoil. On social media, my lifeline to the real world, feminist battles waged constantly and I received daily updates from the frontline against racist police brutality in the US. This PhD did not make me a feminist or anti-racist, that happened as a child. I did have to wonder if maybe my PhD just coincided with a particularly troublesome time for equality. My conclusion was that the PhD tuned my dial into a more close and critical reading of events. It also afforded time at a computer and a willingness to procrastinate: I'm not avoiding writing, I'm educating misogynists on Twitter.

Gill notes how traditional academic modes of writing "*textually disembodies research*" (Gill, 1998: 24, emphasis in original), as though the text is produced by a machine rather than a thinking, feeling, situated human being. Frost and Elichaoff (2014) suggest that some feminist scholars deliberately write in a disruptive, illogical manner to counteract the rational, patriarchal traditional writing of the academy. Gill possibly contradicts this by suggesting that feminist research, if it is to be of use to marginalised communities, should be accessible to all, including people outside of academia, and hence the writing of the research should be 'clear, accessible and empowering' (Gill, 1998:26). Butler, however, resists this call for clarity by writing in a way that resists the normative rules of grammar (Lloyd, 2007). As this section has demonstrated, I lack confidence in my writing skills and would not be able to write in a deconstructed style (i.e. a style that contests conventional grammar and other traditions of formal writing) (Weedon, 1997), I have instead aimed (with the mythical blood, sweat, and tears) for an accessible clarity in my writing.

January 2015

I will not sit down and do this writing. I look in the cupboard for food I know we don't have. I eat something anyway knowing it won't satisfy me. I put the kettle on again. … I welcome the interruptions from children. Perhaps I even encourage them. I check twitter and facebook. Nothing new. I press refresh again.

Still no more words. How can I be a writer if I can't actually sit and write? … My youngest daughter is sat next to me. What a lot of writing you're doing" I said. Wish she would say that to me.

Procrastination has been defined by one group of academics as 'intentionally deferring or delaying work that must be completed.' (Schraw et al., 2007:13). Schraw et al. found that postponing work often meant students we able to focus fully on the work as the deadline approached and immerse themselves in the task for long periods (e.g. 12 hours). This, of course, may be an easier strategy for success when you are young (and still have the energy reserves to 'pull an all nighter') and without caring responsibilities.

March 2015

This paper was really hard to write. Like almost impossible. I could write something. Two and a half years of PhD training has got me to the point where I can start writing when I don't know what it is I need to write. But it wasn't right. … maybe the problem with writing wasn't the story but maybe, just maybe, the story didn't belong in words.

Just as academic writing can put up barriers to entry, dance has its own gatekeepers. Cancienne (Cancienne, 2008 and Cancienne and Bagley, 2008) took the stories from research participants and worked alone, to turn the stories into research based dance rather than working in partnership with the interviewees. Is this another form of privileged communication; gatekeepers barring anyone without the 'right' credentials or allies ensuring that researchers have basic literacy skills before attempting to communicate with the world? We have already seen viewpoints by Piirto and Leavy in the previous section.

7.4 End notes

This chapter has, whilst focusing solely on my own experience, still reflected aspects of the previous three chapters. It began with the difficulty of the intersection of gender and age (if we assume that caring responsibilities are more likely with an older age) on the experience of the researcher in the university. The intersection meant that the researcher experienced being an insider and an outsider at various point and locations through the research process. This also relates to ideas around taking up space and who is allowed entry to certain spaces (metaphorical and literal).

The question of who or what bodies get to be a dancer appeared again with the concern over body imaged. Which is related to the concept of being judged by criteria not necessarily of our own choosing. An idea that resurfaces in this chapter when discussing academic writing.

Over four chapter I have considered my data from differing viewpoints: listening, watching, dancing and reflecting. The next chapter integrates the insights from all four chapters into one final discussion.

Chapter 8 - Ensemble

This chapter revisits the key themes that have emerged across the previous four chapters and links them together whilst reconnecting them with the research aims. This chapter will consider each research aim in turn. As first introduced in Chapter 2, the research aims were to:

1) Increase understanding of the experience of older people participating in community arts and health provision
2) Increase understanding of the experience of an artist leading community arts and health provision
3) Consider some of the thinking underpinning the community dance artist's practice when working with older people
4) Develop a methodology suitable for capturing the fullness of the experience of working with community arts and health.

This chapter is called *Ensemble* after the part of a dance number where everyone dances together: after their solos of the previous four chapters, the findings now work together to produce the finale. I begin with the first research aim, and continue in the same format with the other research aims. I discuss the three core ideas that have come out of the findings. I then have a section titled *Assemblé*, a balletic term meaning 'to join together' (Mackie, 1986:117). In ballet, it is a jump where the feet are drawn together in the air, in this chapter, it is the ideas that are drawn together.

8.1 Increase understanding of the experience of older people participating in community arts and health provision.

8.1.1 Care and Trust

Commencing with the first aim, I argue that my findings evidenced that care and trust were recurrent themes throughout the research findings. This thesis has centred on a definition of care as person centred care as formulated by Rogers (Tudor et al., 2004). Manley et al. (2011) agree that most authorities consider the theories of care and person centred care to be synonymous. My

thesis also used Conradson's (2003) concept of care as being more than simply doing tasks *for* a person but also taking an interest in another person's well-being.

The dancers in my study experienced care flowing both ways between the dancers and also between myself and the dancers. The findings also evidenced there was trust amongst the group members and a sense of feeling safe in the group. The trust was demonstrated in section 4.4.3 where the dancers talked about having trust in my professional judgement, in section 5.2.1 where the dancers were observed paying into the tin without prompting, the way the dancers contributed to the arts work in section 6.3 and in the insider status of the researcher in section 7.1. McCormack and McCance (2010) list mutual trust as one of the foundational principles of person centred care in nursing.

For care and trust to exist within in the dance space, the dancers have to do work or perform care. In Chapter 3, work was defined as something that people learn how to do and actively do in their daily lives (Campbell and Gregor, 2004) and performativity was defined as a repeated act (Lloyd, 2007) that creates our experience of reality. The work the dancers did included sharing information about themselves, and identifying when and what information was appropriate and how much. Knowing when to stop sharing is as important as knowing when to start; the group took turns and prompted inclusion and continuation. To be able to know that someone has finished, the group members also had to listen carefully and take an interest, so that they could prompt someone to continue if they got 'cut off' or interrupted. They also made the socially accepted noises and gestures that indicated they were taking interest and made them at the correct moment. This is similar to Roger's 'empathic understanding' as discussed in section 2.8.1 (Casemore, 2006). McCormack et al. (2011) note that person-centred care cannot be made of a single act, they go on to discuss how the care environment must be supportive of the carer to enable person-centred care but their argument might also be developed to suggest that care must be repeatedly performed to exist, just like Butler's performative acts (Lloyd, 2007).

The theme of the dancers exercising autonomy to enable self-care was discussed in both *Listening* and *Watching* (Chapters 4 and 5). Dancers felt the space was safe enough to choose to disengage or engage in a different way to others if that was the best way to keep themselves safe. They also had trust in the session and in me as the dance artist that the activity and the space was safe.

Some dancers discussed topics that suggested the group experienced improvements in their quality of life. Other dancers mentioned feeling worse after the dance session before they could feel better but all the dancers trusted that the dancing would be good for them, whether now or in the longer term.

8.1.2 Belonging

Closely related to care is the experience of belonging. Belonging was introduced in Chapter 2 in relation to community. In *Dancing* (section 6.4.3 'Successful ageing') I acknowledged that I am fiercely protective of the worth of the group to which the dancers belong and I suspect the dancers are too (evidenced in *Listening* section 4.4.3, Ruth telling her physio that she was sure I knew what I was doing and also in sections 4.4.2 and 6.3.1 where they take a great interest in my research and have pride in being able to contribute). Belonging developed as a theme in each chapter, for example, in section 4.2.4, the dancers described their ease in the venue, and this could be observed in section 5.2.2. In section 5.2.3, the dancers could be observed doing hidden work that allowed the church, that they belonged to, to continue to function well.

Kitwood (1997) described person centred practice as a practice underpinned by love. Whilst Kitwood was considering the experience of caring for someone with dementia and it is important to note, again, that no one in this study was living with dementia, this is very much how I experienced the giving and receiving of care in the group. Ballatt and Campling (2011) term a similar experience as kindness. They argue for a kind way of working in healthcare that acknowledges the connectedness of humans in the same space. Kindness is enacted when people 'are inclined to attentiveness to the other, to gentleness,

warmth and creativity on their behalf' (Ballatt and Campling, 2011: 10). But they insist that this kindness must be used with intelligence and knowledge. Hence love, kindness and care are all appropriate words to express the experience of being in the group.

The application of knowledge and intelligence could be seen in *Listening* (Chapter 4) where the Sittingham dancers noted the ways the sessions challenged them, somatically and intellectually. They additionally noted that such challenges might not suit everyone but it was perfect for them. The Crantock dancers used humour as one of their grounds for connection with the dance artist and with others, again noting that other people might want something different but the fit was right for these dancers.

Belonging also seemed to bring a sense of obligation for the dancers. Ruth did not want to miss a session, either because there were not many left before the Christmas break or because there are not many dancers paying the fee that I rely on for my living (see section 4.4.3). The dancers mentioned feeling invested in my research but appeared to have a sense of duty around their involvement. One of the five ways to well-being is 'give' (Aked et al., 2008) so the dancers may have derived benefit from helping me with my work. The richness of the data found depended on the strong relationship between us, built up over the years we have felt an obligation to each other. It is possible that a short term intervention would not have access to similar data due to not having the established relationships.

8.1.3 Aesthetics

The experience of the aesthetics of the sessions was also noted in *Listening* and *Watching*. Throughout the thesis I have taken 'aesthetics' to mean both the visual and the auditory experience that gives pleasure. The dancers said they enjoyed the music provided and could be seen to delight in some of the music choices on the video of the sessions. The pleasure in using the beautiful, colourful props was also noted. In *Listening* (Chapter 4), I cited the work of Moss and O'Neil (2014) who have researched the importance of everyday aesthetics. Having regular access to objects we consider pleasing is another

argument for the long term role of arts in the lives of older people, rather than looking at arts and health as a short term intervention. Schuster and Graves (2004) found that pleasure was one of the most important factors to ensure that older people continued to engage with physical activity in the long term.

8.1.4 Assemblé

The first research aim was to understand more about the experience of being in one of my community arts and health groups for an older person. From the findings, I have derived three themes: care and trust, belonging, and aesthetics. All three themes are relational concepts. The experience of being in community arts and health provision is not a passive one. It is clear from this research aim that community arts and health practice is not done for, to or on the participants. The dancers must each take an active part in creating the group but each group of individuals will create a unique group: the Sittingham group was not the same as the Crantock group. The experience is interpersonal, that is, it is not located in the individual, it happens between individuals. The experience is also a pleasurable one. The second aim shifted the focus from the participants to the dance leader and is discussed in the next section.

8.2 Develop understanding of the experience of an artist leading community arts and health provision.

8.2.1 Care and belonging

In Chapter 2, I understood that providing person centred care was fundamental to my practice. However, one of the more exciting findings for me was the notion that I, as the dance artist leading a session, could benefit from the community arts and health provision. I received care from members of the groups and I also felt a belonging that, as explained in section 7.3, I did not necessarily feel in other areas of my professional life. It is obvious when using Conradson's (2003) definition of care (where it is taking an interest in another's well-being) how even frail members of the group can offer care to other people.

It is possible that the idea of the professional gaining benefit from the provision is contentious however, considering that one of the 'Five ways to well-being' (Aked et al., 2008) is to Give then it can be seen that the opportunity to connect in this way can be beneficial for the participants. Care for me was demonstrated through taking an interest in my children (in sections 4.4.2 and 5.4.3) and being supportive through bereavement (section 5.4.3). I believe the process of research our practice has also strengthened our relationships because they are deeply invested in my success, an impact that often goes unnoticed in research.

Knowing about and researching the process of arts and health delivery through first-hand experience meant that I was attuned to the presence of care in the sessions, and was able to collect evidence through *Listening, Watching* and *Dancing.* Had I not been primed, it would have been probable I would have missed the very small actions that enact care in the sessions.

I was expecting to write a lot about my own outsider experience but I was surprised at how many communities I am a part of. I am in a community of professional educators when I am at Sittingham (*Dancing* 'Hold my hand and listen with your skin'). I am in a community of artists (*Dancing* 'Take me home'), looking out for each other and supporting each other's artistic endeavours. Through the literatures of Conquergood, Denzin, Barone and Eisner, Leavy and Richardson, I can also be part of a community of distanced yet like-minded scholars. As a freelance community dance artist I am used to working alone. In *Dancing* and *Reflecting*, I, as the researcher, felt outside the community of PhD researchers at my university and in *Reflecting*, I felt outside the wider community of UK arts and health researchers.

8.2.2 Dance or exercise

I experienced a tension between dance and exercise in my practice. I struggled to balance creative dancer initiated activity and more 'teacher'-led work. The dancers did not consider themselves dancers and they thought of the activities

in the sessions as exercise (*Listening*) however they frequently looked like dancers (*Dancing*), looked to be enjoying dance activities (*Watching*) and enjoyed ballet (*Listening*). But whilst the dancers thought they were exercising, I had an awareness that the aesthetic nature of the activities and the appropriateness of the music were also important to the dancers. In *Listening,* the dancers note that the sessions are not purely physical (exercise) as they enjoy the intellectual challenges within in a session. It was also highlighted in *Dancing* that the dancers were not the only ones who struggled with their identity as 'dancer': as a dance artist I found myself questioning if I could be a dancer too (section 7.2).

In *Listening*, I suggested that somatic movement contrasts with more vigorous movement and that this more vigorous movement is preferred at Crantock. This parallels the contrast between dance and exercise. As the dance artist I chose to accept this as the group preference rather than attempt to persuade them to adopt my movement preferences.

8.2.3 Doing work

Maher (2004) notes the difference in understanding when discussing being a mother or doing the tasks of mothering: when a person 'is' a role then the work involved is made invisible. Similarly, it should be noted that the artist does work rather than simply embodying a role so that (another) researcher might notice the work done by the artist, even unconsciously, within, and in preparation for, the sessions. In much of the arts and health literature, the role of the artist is unnoticed: they simply provide the arts activity which is supposed to contain the well-being and health enhancing properties.

Hidden work was observed through *Watching*. I could be seen leading work non-verbally. I could be seen allowing and facilitating talk in the transitions and using the session plan and iPod to manage the pacing of the session. Both in *Listening* and *Watching*, the variety of the session was discussed as a method of ensuring participant safety and of maintaining interest.

Since there is no standardised training for community artists, it is not possible to make any assumptions about how common this type of hidden work exists in other artist's practice. The hidden nature of the work also means that on the training artists do undertake, the skills employed are unlikely be discussed.

8.2.4 Assemblé

For the second research aim, I examined my own experience of being in the groups. I again derived three themes: care and belonging, dance or exercise, and doing work. These three themes all indicate that the dance artist is not a benign, neutral actor in the group. The dance artist is an integral part of the group doing the same work as the participants to create the group as well as providing the arts activities. The notion of the artist as doing work is important to future research in this field: if the work the artist does is hidden, then researchers must take care as to what they attribute outcomes in arts and health interventions. The arts practice is difficult to disentangle from the group work practice. Whilst the dance artist may feel alone whilst working in the field, there is a wider community that she is able to tap into. The next research aim moves the focus from the experience of the artist on to the background to her practice.

8.3 Consider some of the thinking underpinning the community dance artist's practice when working with older people

8.3.1 Unconscious and intuitive

The most difficult aspect of this research aim was uncovering the unconscious knowledge that was used in the dance sessions. For example, in *Watching*, the physical objectives were not explicit in planning but they were understood in relation to the use of props and music. The hidden work involved with delivering the session has already been touched on the section above. The findings chapters really brought out the unconscious nature of the planning: how by being part of the group you learn how the group likes to work and most of the time you cater to that, occasionally you will push against to see how

flexible the boundaries are. In *Watching*, I mentioned how I had made a conscious decision to use all the props less frequently at Crantock and to use the elastic less frequently at Sittingham. This was a decision based on my intuitive understanding of body language and speech that did not directly express the dancers' feelings and meanings.

8.3.2 Routine

Watching demonstrated the need for routine and expectations in the delivery of these sessions: the dancers had learned our shared expectations for keeping themselves safe and a shared understanding of how to use the props. Familiarity with the dance artist's ways and how I structure the sessions added to the sense of safe space for the dancers. Predictability, however, does not mean repeating the same activities week after week; the variety within the session has already been discussed in this chapter. Like improvising, which was defined by Kratus (1996) in Chapter 2 as existing within limits, the dance artist is free to choose any activity within the self imposed limitations of remaining seated, being accessible even by frail bodies, using the props I own, using music I expect to be popular and the structure of an hour of differing activities.

8.3.3 Person-centred

The person-centred nature of the work was already known at the beginning of the research and was discussed at length in Chapter 2. The findings emphasised how fundamental person centred practice is to the arts practice: as discussed in section 4.4 with the different ways of relating to others in the group, in *Watching* with the mutual trust and consideration of aesthetics. *Dancing* could also be seen as a reminder of the person centred principles behind the community arts and health work with the attempt to gain an embodied, empathic understanding of the dancers' experiences.

The understanding that all responses are valid and accepted was apparent in *Watching* and underpinned the sharing of *Dancing*. There is no way to do the work in the session wrongly; even sitting still and listening to the music or watching the movement or colour in the room is successfully taking part in the

session. As in a community of practice, (Wenger, 1998) participation may be peripheral and legitimate. The artist facilitates the session so that the individual dancers may do what they need to do for their own flourishing at that moment.

8.3.4 Assemblé

The third research aim examined the ideas underpinning the arts practice as could be discerned from the findings. The three themes discerned were: unconscious and intuitive, routine and person-centred. The first theme, the practice being unconscious, made this a difficult research aim to explore. Like dance, which is also often difficult to articulate, these similar unconscious processes do not lend themselves easily to language. Whilst my learning about person centred practice was intentional, the way it became a part of my practice was not. Through doing this research, I had to bring to consciousness processes that would have remained unexamined, yet vital to my practice. This consciousness highlighted how the sessions, whilst always different, were based around a familiar structure so that dancers could feel safe and trust in the routine. The final aim looked beyond the findings to understand more about how the findings came to be known.

8.4 Develop a methodology suitable for capturing the fullness of the experience of working with community arts and health

8.4.1 Improvised

This research aim was wide ranging. In the end, the improvised nature of the dance practice reflects the improvised nature of learning to research and is probably just as 'in the moment' (and therefore unrepeatable). The writing down of the research methods and findings gives a fixity that was not the embodied sense of the research. The linking of the research to existing literature gives a sense of intention when the experience was more like Badley's (2011: 256) '*scrabbling*' or grasping for answers (and questions) when the way forward was unclear. This scrabbling was also evident in my dance interpretations, which are themselves sensemaking processes.

Dancing was improvised in both the sense the dances were created through improvisation and that the process of dancing through the research was started without an expectation of how it might be used in the final analysis. In the final review, *Dancing* and *Reflecting* offer differing modes of reflexivity. Pagis (2009) describes how body based somatic practices can offer access to self-reflexivity, similar to the more familiar discursive methods that also include journal writing.

The fear of being judged by unsuitable criteria, both for the arts work and the writing, surfaced several times. As noted in section 7.2, suitable criteria for judging arts based work might be '*attentiveness*, *empathy*, … *sensitivity*, … *honesty*, … *openness*' (Davies and Dodd, 2002: 288). Judgement of improvised work should embrace the 'of the moment' nature of the work.

8.4.2 Multi-sensory

The use of video was important to the success of the research. Being able to capture the hidden practices, and those which are implicit and taken for granted, from *Watching* added much to the thesis. There were obvious gaps when comparing what was easily discussed and that which remained unspoken and would have remained unnoticed without the use of the video. The discrepancy between the spoken and written evidence and what could be observed indicated areas that ought to be explored further. The not noticed nature of these findings may also have only revealed themselves through the familiarity of the researcher with the setting and the participants: I think it unlikely a researcher dropping into a project would be able to pick up on these details.

This thesis offers its uniqueness as a record of the voice (textual and non-verbal) of a practitioner. Much arts and health literature is written from the point of view of exploring another person's practice. The thesis also has methodological innovation in presenting some of the practitioner's voice through movement. Since so much of the thought process around the practice is unconscious, a non-verbal method of sharing is highly appropriate.

Including *Dancing* also gave the thesis a chance to use non-verbal communication of experiences and ideas which meant the thesis was able to contain some thoughts that are unavailable to text. The unconscious and hidden aspects of the practice are difficult to talk, and write, about. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a lot of information missing from the arts and health literature about what is happening in a session. *Listening* noted that dancers struggled to talk about some aspects of the session so instead discussed related topics. *Dancing* and *Reflecting* evolved from my struggle to write about this research; in *Dancing*, I used movement to help me think about the research and, in *Reflecting*, I wrote about my roadblocks in an attempt to move forward with my writing.

8.4.3 Messy

One finding that came to light was the difficulty of neatly dividing the findings into categories or headings: virtually every finding could sit equally well at some point else in the thesis. This difficulty persists even in this chapter. Tamas (2008) writes how the orderliness of words does not speak the truth about the messiness of traumatic experiences. Whilst I would not want to draw parallels between the pain of divorce, abuse or holocaust survival with the privileged difficulty of writing in higher education, I still believe Tamas' (2008) assertion that the fixing of text on a page obscures the messiness of the experience.

The nature of community arts and health and the lack of a formal training structure means that, unlike other practices such as teaching and therapy, there is no pre-existing conceptual framework around which artists can discuss their practice. This can make writing about practice difficult but also means artists do not have a narrow view of their practice, they are free to situate their delivery in any conceptual framework they feel appropriate.

There was much consternation about how much detail to include in *Reflecting*. I battled with myself how much of my PhD struggle it was safe to share. This is, after all, a document that will be in the public domain and may be referred to by people I hope to work with, or for, for many years to come. I have attempted to include as much background to influences that have shaped this

thesis without including excessive detail about people close to me who have not chosen to be a part of this research.

In contrast to the one off nature of the improvisation, Badley (2011) describes a four stage academic writing process. He starts with *scrabbling* for meaning and excavates other's work grasping for understanding and new knowledge. Badley (2011) then moves on to *scribbling* or writing freely and without regard for audience, much like the journal writing in *Reflecting*. The final two stages *scribing* or writing with an intention of an audience and *scrubbing* or an intense editing process are where the messiness is removed from the text and made academic. Even in this thesis, where a conscious decision was made to include much of the messy, embodied, contradictory text as possible, there was an emphasis on the latter stages of Badley's model.

8.4.4 Assemblé

Just as the dance artist is not benign in the community arts and health group, the wider academy is not benign in the research process. Whilst the thesis attempted to retain its improvised, multi-sensory and messy spirit, in order to prove I have served my research apprenticeship, I have presented a thesis that resembles scholarship in my field.

8.5 End notes

This chapter has drawn together the findings of the previous four chapters and organised them under the original research aims. The final chapter of the thesis will examine the findings for each research aim and evaluate the success of the research.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion

The final chapter in this thesis will recap the research aims, consider the contributions that this thesis has made to knowledge, recall the findings, provide a personal evaluation how well the aims have been met and provide recommendations and future directions for this research and the researcher.

9.1 Research aims

In undertaking this doctoral study, I intended to discover more about the experience of being in community arts and health provision for older people. I wanted to shed a light on the mechanisms that might lead to the outcomes reported in the arts and health literature. I was also looking for a way of working that would honour and contain the non-verbal aspects of the arts practice. At the end of Chapter 2, I formulated four research aims, to:

1. Increase understanding of the experience of older people participating in community arts and health provision
2. Develop understanding of the experience of an artist leading community arts and health provision
3. Consider some of the thinking underpinning the community dance artist's practice when working with older people
4. Develop a methodology suitable for capturing the fullness of the experience of working with community arts and health.

My research study was a 13 month (from October 2013 to November 2014) ethnography of two community arts and health sessions for older people that I led. As reported in *Ensemble*, I found, in answer to research aim (1) that the dancers experienced care but had to do work to enable a caring environment. Additionally, the dancers experienced the group as an exercise group rather than the dance session that was intended but they did appreciate the aesthetic nature of the sessions. For some dancers, intellectual challenge, and for others, humour, were also important parts of the experience.

For research aim (2) the dance artist also experienced receiving, and worked to produce, care in the session, and I noted in *Ensemble* that the dance artist is not a neutral agent, applying the intervention to the participants; the, often unconscious, work done by the artist leading the group is an important part of the experience. Balancing the dance/exercise tension was a feature of the work done by the artist.

In research aim (3) the study revealed the unconscious nature of many aspects that had been internalised (nature of the props and of the participants and their capabilities) and the improvisational nature of the sessions (anything goes within the expected routine). The study highlighted the underpinning theory of person centred practice to the arts facilitation.

Finally, I did not create a new methodology as contained in research aim (4). The thesis did, however, contain improvisational movement and reflective writing on the research process to capture some of the non-verbal and informally held knowledge about the session delivery and research practice. The messy and improvisational nature of these modes contributed a richness to the research, as did the use of video to capture some of the ethnographic data which led to uncovering of hidden aspects of the working of the group. This way of working made available findings that the participants and the author as dance leader and author as researcher struggled to talk about.

Throughout the thesis questions of 'is this dance or exercise', 'who is a dancer' and 'is this dance' occurred. There is no easy resolution for these questions. I believe everyone in this research is a dancer and what we do is always dancing. Some of the dancers are not always convinced of this stance but we continue to dance together.

I make no claim that the findings in this thesis are a complete representation of the experience for either the dancers or the dance artist. However, as an individual having been submerged in these settings for an extended period, I believe I have adequately captured a slice of the experience of being in the

groups and I believe, through the multi-sensory nature of the thesis, I have managed to convince an audience of the honesty of my claims.

9.2 Contribution to knowledge

There are three interlinked points that stand out in this research as being very interesting for me. The first being how the participants must do work to enable the session to be successful. The second point is how much of the work done (by both the artist and the participants) is intuitive, unconscious and often hidden. The final point is the value of using the video as part of the ethnography; the use of the video allowed access to these hidden, unconscious practices. This is key for future arts and health work, unless these aspects of the sessions are captured, they cannot be discussed in the literature. However, the ethics of video recording will need to be considered: who and/or what will be recorded and to what end.

My work contributes to the literatures on arts and health by adding weight to Creech et al.'s (2014) argument that the way the leader and the participants interact may be more important than the art form for well-being outcomes. This work should prompt other arts and health researchers looking at the outcomes of arts and health work that it may not be the arts practice but the interpersonal elements that are providing the benefits. However, in the controlled studies (for example Cohen et al., 2006 or McKinley et al., 2008), a control group did not offer the same health benefits as the arts group, despite the obvious potential for social interaction. Therefore, it is important that I do not use my research to erase the arts activity from the group. This thesis also contributes to the gerontology literature by highlighting the work older women are required to do to get the health benefits provided by social support in later life. Whilst this thesis does not create a new methodology for other researchers to follow, it does demonstrate a way of working that integrates differing modalities and may point the way for other researchers to explore different ways of knowing when they research arts and health practice or group work with older people.

9.3 Critique of the thesis

Ethnography, as a methodology, was useful for investigating the experience of being in the group; observing the group managed to generate findings that were not mentioned in conversation, but the use of conversation with the dancers acted as a participant check to keep the research commentary close to the dancers' experience. More information might have been available if the method of managing conversations was more robust. Some members of the group spoke very little, whilst others spoke a lot. Another researcher may have been able to get a more balanced amount of information from each participant, they may have also been able to focus the group on more relevant questions. However, I am not sure how this would be accomplished without affecting the agency of the individual participants to choose how to engage with the post session conversation.

The videos of the sessions were a rich resource but may have benefitted from group analysis to reduce the bias of practitioner-researcher (Jordan and Henderson, 1995). A researcher without a background in community arts and health might offer a wider view of the practice but using other community artists would be advantageous so as to spot nuances of the practice whilst avoiding the blindness that might come from being familiar with the group. The chapter may have been enhanced by reviewing more of the videos had the time been available.

The use of improvisational dance may have benefitted from a stronger theoretical and practice based. Towards the end of the PhD, I discovered work by Olsen (2014) that strengthened my artistic practice by highlighting my preferred movement patterns and expanding my range by forcing me to use patterns I would not normally default to. The dance pieces would have been improved with more attention to technique and a sustained regular dance practice which would have been facilitated had I had access to studio space throughout the PhD.

The reflexive chapters are illuminating of the research process however I wonder how differently the research might have been shaped had I been able to use a more positive narrative of self during the PhD period.

If I were to do this research again, I would spend more time, much earlier, doing community engagement. I would be bolder about the creative elements and I would have more participant involvement meaning I could do more creative work with the participants that would form part of the research

Finally, my account of the groups is smoothed of any conflict that may have been present. This is mainly a result of me not experiencing any conflict however I do wonder was the church a closed space? To have a sense of belonging then there must be a sense of outsider. Conradson (2003) writes about how people possibly felt excluded from a particular space of care he studied because of its relation to a Christian church. People felt unable to enter the space because then felt they were incompatible with the Christian ethos. I wonder if that might be applicable for the Sittingham group. Or is the group simply not know outside of the church? Conradson (2003) also notes that some people who were nervous about the church connection were pleasantly surprised when they did enter the space and realised no one was attempting to convert them.

9.4 Recommendations

Based on my research, I have three recommendations for future arts and health research.

This thesis has described the process of how I do community arts and health work. As stated in the introduction, I do not present this as the only way to do this work. Nor am I intending to offer myself up as an example of best practice. I have simply attended to my practice, as Raw et al. (2012) argue researchers should, and I suggest that arts and health research needs more artists to examine their own practice so the research community may understand more about the process that underlies the health and social outcomes that have been researched thus far. The strength of this work lies in the process of dancer

becoming researcher and reflecting on practice. Since there is no standard education for artists, without further investigation, there is no way to know if the care experienced in these groups is unique to groups led by this artist or common in community arts. Since the work practices of this artist were hidden until this doctoral research, I am excited to see what might be found in other artists' practice.

A deep understanding of the process of delivering arts and health is required to know what outcomes are possible for the work. Being immersed in the practice of arts and health and allowing the research to come from my own practice gives a strong backing to my claims of what is important in arts and health practice. I recommend close collaboration between artists and researchers and respect for artists' expertise by academic researchers.

For researchers using control groups, they must be aware that there are many different processes occurring within a session. Not just the arts activities but the interactions between the group members and between the group members and the artist. Researchers need to know which processes they are controlling for.

9.5 Future directions

As mentioned in the previous section, I recommend more community artists need to research their own practice to discover more about the process involved in community arts and health practice. However, community artists are notoriously poorly paid (DHA Communication, 2012) and, for many, the fees involved in post graduate education would be prohibitive. So an immediate research project would be to develop a way of training artists to become researchers of their own practice but in a short course format.

I personally would be interested to research how the processes enacted in these groups compare to a similar group where the dancers are living with dementia. My intuitive expectation is that people living with dementia also do care work in a creative arts group but within a smaller circle of people, possibly just with one other person.

For the immediate future beyond the completion of this thesis, I also have a publishing plan where I intend to share the findings of this research with a range of journals, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the research.

For my own research practice, this apprenticeship has given me the courage to step beyond my comfort zone and embrace my identity as an arts based researcher, it has pushed me to interrogate my practice that I had never thought to and this questioning has not stopped just because the research period has finished.

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Music used in the thesis

Date in bracket relates to the release date of the album/compilation that I use for the song rather than the actual release date of song as a single. The data comes from the Gracenote database

The Beatles (1970) 'With a little help from my friends' *1967-1970 [Disc 1]*

Bellamy Brothers (2000) 'If I Said You Had A Beautiful Body Would You Hold It Against Me' *The Cool Sound Of The 70's [Disc 2]*

Cash, J. (1998) 'Ring of Fire' *The Best of Johnny Cash*

Clanton, J. (2012) 'Venus in Blue Jeans' *200 Sixties Hits: 200 Classic No.1 Songs from the 60s*

The Commitments (1991) 'Destination: Anywhere' *The Commitments*

The Coronas (2012) 'Blind lead the blind' *Closer to you*

Darin, B. (2010) 'Beyond the Sea' *Dreamboats and Petticoats Summer Holiday*

Denver, J. (2008) 'Take Me Home Country Roads' *For the Love of Country*

Elbow (2003) 'Flying Dream 143' *Cast of Thousands*

Elbow (2008) 'The Bones of You' *The Seldom Seen Kid.* UK

Francis, C. (2011) 'Lipstick on your collar' *Lipstick on your collar*

Geary, M. (2011) 'Take Me Home' *Songs About Love, Songs About Leaving*

Green Day (1997) 'Hitchin' a ride' *International Superhits*

Hansard, G. (2012) 'Philanderer' *Rhythm and Repose*

Hansard, G. (2012) 'This Gift' *Rhythm and Repose*

Hansard, G. (2012) 'You Will Become' *Rhythm and Repose*

Hyland B. (2010) 'Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini (Single version)' *Dreamboats and Petticoats Summer Holiday*

Irglova, M. (2014) 'The Leading Bird' *Muna*

Irglova, M. (2014) 'This Right Here' *Muna*

Pollock, E. (2010) 'The Loop' *The Law of Large Numbers*

Presley, E. (2001) 'Always on my mind' *The 50 Greatest Love Songs*

Previn, A. & the London Symphony Orchestra (1976)

Price, M. (2007) 'Breathing Machine' and 'Lakelight', *Contemporary Dance Music Vol. 7.* The Control Room

Ray, J. (2014) 'Just Walking in the rain' *100 Rock n Roll Hits & Jukebox Classics*

- The Very Best 50s & 60s Rock and Roll Collection from the Greatest Legends

Rice, D. (2014) 'Colour me in' *My Favourite Faded Fantasy*

The Shadows (1996) 'Apache' *The Best of Heartbeat [Disc 1]*

Shannon, D. (2010) 'Runaway' *Just Great Songs [Disc 1]*

Tormé, M. (1999) 'Blue Moon' *Music to Watch Girls By Vol. 1 [Disc 2]*

Twitty, C. (2010) 'It's only make believe' *Just Great Songs [Disc 1]*

Unknown artist (no date) 'Bells of Norwich' *Dance for Re-Connecting - Circle Dance*

Van Etten, S. (2014) 'Your love is killing me' *Are we there*

The Walker Brothers (1966) 'The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore' *The Best of Heartbeat.* UK:

Appendices

Appendix A – Participant Information Sheet

Participant information sheet
Becoming a Dancer: recruiting older people to community dance provision

Thanks for taking the time to read this information sheet. Please let Maxine know if there is anything that is unclear or that is not mentioned here that you would like to know about.

The project

I am a research student at Manchester Metropolitan University. I am researching Arts and Health. My particular interest is in community dance and older people and social connections. For this current phase (up to Christmas 2013), I'm looking at how and why older adults start (or restart) dancing and why they keep coming back (or why they don't come back!). I hope this will mean that individual community dance artists and larger companies that provide activities in the community can put on dance sessions that work for people just like you.

The sessions

The sessions will be held at Sittingham on Tuesday mornings. The sessions cost £3.

Each week we will be moving to lots of different music (I'll bring the music but I would love to hear your suggestions for songs, artists or types of music you would like to work to). Sometimes with props, sometimes just with our bodies. Sometimes I will lead, sometimes, I will give you suggestions and you can decide how to move. We will work as individuals, in pairs and as a whole group.

About me

I'm originally from Oldham but now live in Bury. I'm a mum to two small children. I've been leading community dance sessions for older people since 2006 and I also teach dancing to children.

Your contribution

You do not have to contribute to the research. You are quite welcome to come and join the group but not take any part in my research (but know that I will be writing about **my** experiences so you might be included in my final report but you will never be identified if you don't want). You are free to opt in later during the project if you change your mind and feel you want to contribute.

If you would like to contribute, I would like you to spend sometime talking to me, usually after a session, in a group, over a cup of tea, and tell me about how you thought the session went and also tell me about you, your dancing and life in general. You only have to talk about things you are comfortable sharing. I will want to record these conversations so I can listen to you properly and worry about taking notes later. I will type up those conversations and I will start to analyse if any recurrent themes emerge. I will bring back my ideas to the group and the group can decide if they sound right or not. Stories will be summarised so people outside the group won't be able to identify the individuals in them.

Your data

I need your contact details in case I need to cancel sessions. I may also contact you if you miss a session and I'm worried about you. You are free to leave the project at any time, you do not need to give anyone a reason for leaving, if you like, I can keep your contact details so I can tell you about what happens next with the project. You can also choose to withdraw your data from the study but carry on coming to the sessions, again, just let me know. I will also ask some questions about your health to aid me in planning the session. However, I am not a medical expert so if you or I have any concerns about how creative movement may impact your health then it is best that you contact your GP. All personal information will either be kept on my person (when travelling to or from the sessions) or locked in a filing cabinet on the university premises in a locked room. At the end of my research project (August 2015), data will be stored in accordance with the University's record retention schedule (currently kept for six years).

I would like to video record the sessions, mainly so I can look at them after the sessions to remind myself what happened and in what order. The tapes will only be viewed by myself and possibly by my supervisors, the people marking my PhD and / or the participants (you) as a group. They will not be put on the internet or broadcast in any other way without consultation with and permission from the dancers involved. The tapes will be kept until the end of my research project (September 2015) and then will be stored in accordance with the University's record retention schedule (currently kept for six years).

Risks

We will be moving so there is a risk of injury as with any physical activity. I will minimise this risk by asking you to fill in a short health questionnaire and if you have any illness or injury that we are worried about, I'll ask you to just get the OK with your GP before joining the sessions. I will design the sessions to accommodate the participants to the best of my knowledge; all of the session will be accessible when seated although if you feel capable there will be

sections where you could stand. I do ask participants to take responsibility for their own bodies and will frequently remind you to do only what you feel comfortable with.

What happens next?
If you would like to take part, please ask Maxine for a consent form.
If you don't want to take part, then thank you for your time.

Contact details
If you wish to speak about any aspect of the project, I (Maxine) am contactable on [mobile] or [landline]. If you want to speak about the project but are uncomfortable talking to me, my supervisor, Rebecca Lawthom, can be contacted on [office number].

Appendix B – Session plan

Dance artist: Maxine Horne   Venue: Sittingham   Date: 14/1/14

Time: 10.30 – 11.30   Group: Seated older people

Time	Activity	Music / Props	Benefits	Notes
	Welcome, safety briefing,			
5mins	Warm up	What do you want / Penny Lane	Mobility, pulse raising	
10	Spine mobility	Flying dream	Spine moility	Imagine your spine is seaweed on the sea bed, let it float upwards and twist and sway on the current (you might want to let it drift too). Now imagine your arms are seaweed, move your shoulders, elbows, wrists, fingers. Imagine the space between your bones
15	Balloons	ring of fire / apache	Cardio, connection (eye contact), fun	
20	Arm dance	Runaway	Creativity	Verse – hi/lo chorus – glide, then front/back, glide instrumental – hi/lo chorus
25	Arm dance	Lipstick on your collar	Mobility	point, pull
30	Group choreography	Rhythm of life	Memory, fun	do a simple move, we all copy, next person add another move, don't worry or try to plan in advance, just do something, it can repeat something that has already come. Try to do twice in the time of the song.
35	Elastic		Strength	
40	Arm dance	It's only make believe	Creativity	Verse – imagine in a bubble, grow to the extremes of the bubble, in front, above side, very slowly swing or sway on peak/chorus 3 times thru
45	Parachute	Parachute		
50				
55	Stretch	Portrait of my love		
60	Bells of Norwich		Closing	Sway, ring bells, wave, heart

Appendix C – Registration Form

Registration Form

The dance exercise and creative movement sessions are designed to prompt social interaction and may also improve balance, strength and flexibility. If you have not taken part in any exercise for a while you are advised to speak to a doctor who can check for any condition which may make certain forms of exercise unwise. Please read the following guidelines and advise Maxine if you have any illness, injury, medication or disability that may affect your ability to take part in the class. Your health and your body are always your responsibility. Maxine promises to support you to take full part in the session but remember she's not a medical expert!!

1. Don't exercise if you are tired, unwell or have just eaten a full meal
2. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and soft soled shoes
3. At no time should an exercise or activity cause pain. If it does, stop immediately and advise the dance leader.
4. It is not unusual to feel a bit stiff and tired after the first few sessions. If this continues speak to your doctor.

Name

_____

Address

_____

_____

_____

Phone number

_____

Emergency

contact

_____

Please go on to the next page

Please let me know if you have experienced any of the following (please tick either YES or NO for each condition)

Ticking YES does not necessarily mean you cannot take part

	YES	NO
Asthma or other chest condition		
Cancer		
Coronary Thrombosis		
Falls		
High / Low blood pressure		
Osteoarthritis		
Osteoporosis		
Recent joint replacement		
Recent viral infection		
Rheumatoid arthritis		
Stroke		
Other (please give details)		

Age at start of project (or date of birth):

_____

I have read the guidelines for dance exercise and agree to let Maxine know if anything changes with my health which may affect my ability to exercise.

I consent to MMU processing this information under the requirements of the Data Protection Act

Signed _____

Appendix D - Successfully submitted abstracts

Research Institute for Health & Social Change 2013 Annual Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University, Thursday 4 July and Friday 5 July 2013

What will become: an exploration of beginning to research

My research is a creative exploration of the experience of loneliness for older people and how we can use creative movement to encourage social connection. Richardson (2005) discusses using writing as a method of inquiry; I am experimenting with using choreography / videodance as a method of inquiry.

For the first stage of my research, I am looking to establish a group of over 65 year olds to try out and evaluate creative movement sessions with me. Through film, site specific performance and a paper, I seek to explore the problems I have experienced attempting to recruit participants from the Hulme and Moss Side communities for a pilot study. What can I learn about participant recruitment, the community I hope to work in and my experience as a researcher through choreography?

As I seek to understand the research journey I have taken over the past 10 months, I will examine the ideas around community and the outsider. Is there really a community "over there" that can participate in my research? Am I really an outsider? Is it not true that the participants that I want to engage are outsiders too? I am also forced to consider my role as an artist and the suitability of dance as a medium in this research project.

8th International Conference on Cultural Gerontology, National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland. Thursday 10th – Saturday 12th April 2014.

I am a dancer. Am I a dancer?

This paper (and performance) is an exploration of using arts-based inquiry in researching aging and identity.

My PhD research in Arts and Health is looking at older people and community dance; in particular, how participating in creative dance can help older women with loneliness.

After spending six months on community engagement, I felt it was important to explore how older women in my target communities saw themselves in relation to dance; did they think of themselves as "dancers"?

For the next section of my PhD, I am collecting stories from the women in my dance sessions about dancing and being an older women, observing their movements, collecting stories from local people who don't dance with us and recording my own reflections on the entire research process. These strands will feed into a short performance piece which will act as a further point of reflection for me and the start of a new dialogue with viewers of the piece, who I hope will include the dancers whose stories are in the performance.

Finley (2011) argues that performances of arts-based research "often draw on empathetic understanding to "move" the audience to action – or at least to reflective contemplation of the roles of oppressors and the oppressed." (p445) I hope this performance piece and paper will prompt discussion and reflection on older women, dancing and their place within the local community and wider society.

Finley (2011) 'Critical Arts-Based Inquiry: The Pedagogy and Performance of a Radical Ethical Aesthetic' in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 4th edition, SAGE: Thousand Oaks.

Women, Ageing and Media Summer School and Symposium, University of Gloucester, 17th-19th June 2014.

Are you lonesome tonight? Exploring experiences of loneliness in older age through and with pop song lyrics

My PhD is looking at the experience of loneliness in older age through community dance practices. I am a community dance practitioner experienced in running creative dance workshops. This paper looks at how song lyrics play a role in the sessions.

My PhD is practice based in that the research is conducted through my practice as a community dance artist, it is also arts based in that some of the data collected is in the form of creative movement

Music is a vital part of the dance sessions I lead and loneliness is a difficult subject to talk about. This aspect of my research wants to look at ways in which song lyrics support expressing feelings about loneliness through movement and/or talking?

I have selected songs from across the decades to stimulate movement and conversation. The approach to using the songs varied: for some, the loneliness connection was explicitly highlighted, for others, familiarity with the lyrics was assumed. Data was collected in the form of videoed movement (the dancers), reflective movement (the researcher) and writing reflecting on the movement and the conversations around the movement (the researcher).

Can song lyrics facilitate creative movement exploration of a sensitive topic?

MMU PGR conference, Manchester Metropolitan University, 4th November 2014

Videodance installation.

The selected pieces are representative selection of aspects of my research process.

Social work 3: A piece where I am improvising a physical response to an aspect of my research; the work involved in maintaining a social network (the literature on loneliness in older age makes frequent reference to women having

better social support systems but scant mention of the work involved in maintaining that network)

Transfer report: A reflexive videodance on the process of writing the transfer report. As an embodied researcher, I struggle both with sitting still and writing and expressing myself on the flat page. The choreography and film work also indicates other areas of struggle during writing.

Dancing in a cupboard: A site specific improvisation. Can be read as a metaphor for an embodied researcher (without a head) or as a feminist, arts researcher who has to conduct her research out of sight of the patriarchal university.

Loneliness is a cloak you wear: A videodance created using choreography from older dancers exploring the themes of loneliness using the lyrics of the Walker Brother's song 'The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine' as a starting point. This video was created for the Women, Ageing and Media summer school held at University of Cheltenham in 2014.

Successful ageing: Following the showing of 'Loneliness is a Cloak You Wear', I received audience feedback that suggested the dancers involved in the choreography were not ageing successfully because the dance seated. This improvisation explores seated dance and finds that sitting to dance is not necessarily restricted to older people.

Impact: Conquergood uses performance to 'pull an audience into a sense of the other' (Conquergood, 2007:59); arts offers a way for a 'reader' of research to empathise in a visceral way with the 'researched'. Not only can the impact be felt keenly at a bodily level, the arts have the potential to reach a wider audience than traditional published research.

Keywords: performative social science, videodance, improvisation, feminist gerontology, embodied

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeBr2PsnRJQF81T7NDimThFTWPbfmDgG

Public Engagement and Performance Conference 2015, York, UK, 20-21 March 2015

Performing in front of 80,000 words: how does a dancer write a big book thesis?
(Combination performance and paper)

I am a final year PhD researcher. I am being examined by thesis and viva. I have been researching the experience of older people in age specific community dance provision. I can't write this book.

I want to present my embodied reading of this rich data that incorporates relationships with others, physical experiences and growth in our later years.

The paper will discuss the difficulty of wanting to work with a performative ethnography that challenges the patriarchal, disembodied, text revering academy whilst desperately needing the academy's approval to successfully complete my PhD and start a career.

Women and Ageing: New Cultural and Critical Perspectives. University of Limerick, Ireland. 20-23 May 2015

An older dancer dancing older lives

My PhD research has been an ethnographic study of the community dance groups I lead. These dance groups are specifically targeted at older people and are almost exclusively attended by women. As I reach the final stages of my PhD, I find myself in 'crisis of representation' similar to Richardson's (Ellis et al.,

2008). The stories of these groups are of the body and from the body. I seek to present the stories the dancers share, of ageing, of pain and of growth, through movement. However, I must also deal with my own ageing body. Whilst I am not a former professional ballet dancer such as Wainwright and Williams (2005) cite, I still feel the strain of a dancing life in my body in my late 30s. Denzin (1997) reminds us that we must always remain alert to what is 'us' and what is 'not us' when performing ethnography. As an ageing dancer I find myself identifying with my co-researchers whilst knowing I have little idea of their experience of their bodies.

This performance/paper seeks to document my journey as an (older) dancer wanting to share something of (even) older lives.

References

Denzin, N.K. (1997) Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Ellis, C., Bochner, A., Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y., Morse, J., Pelias, R., & Richardson, L. (2008). Talking and thinking about qualitative research. Qualitative Inquiry, 14, 2, pp254-284.

Wainwright, S. P. and Williams, C. (2005), 'Culture and ageing: reflections on the arts and nursing.' Journal of Advanced Nursing, 52, pp518–525

Biography

Maxine Horne is in her final year of researching her PhD at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Based in the Research Institute for Health and Social Change, her research topic is the experience of older people in community dance provision. The PhD is fully funded through a competitive university stipend. https://www.youtube.com/user/maxinedance/videos